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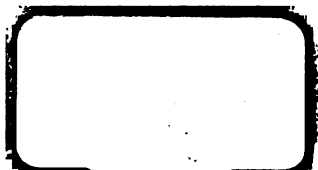
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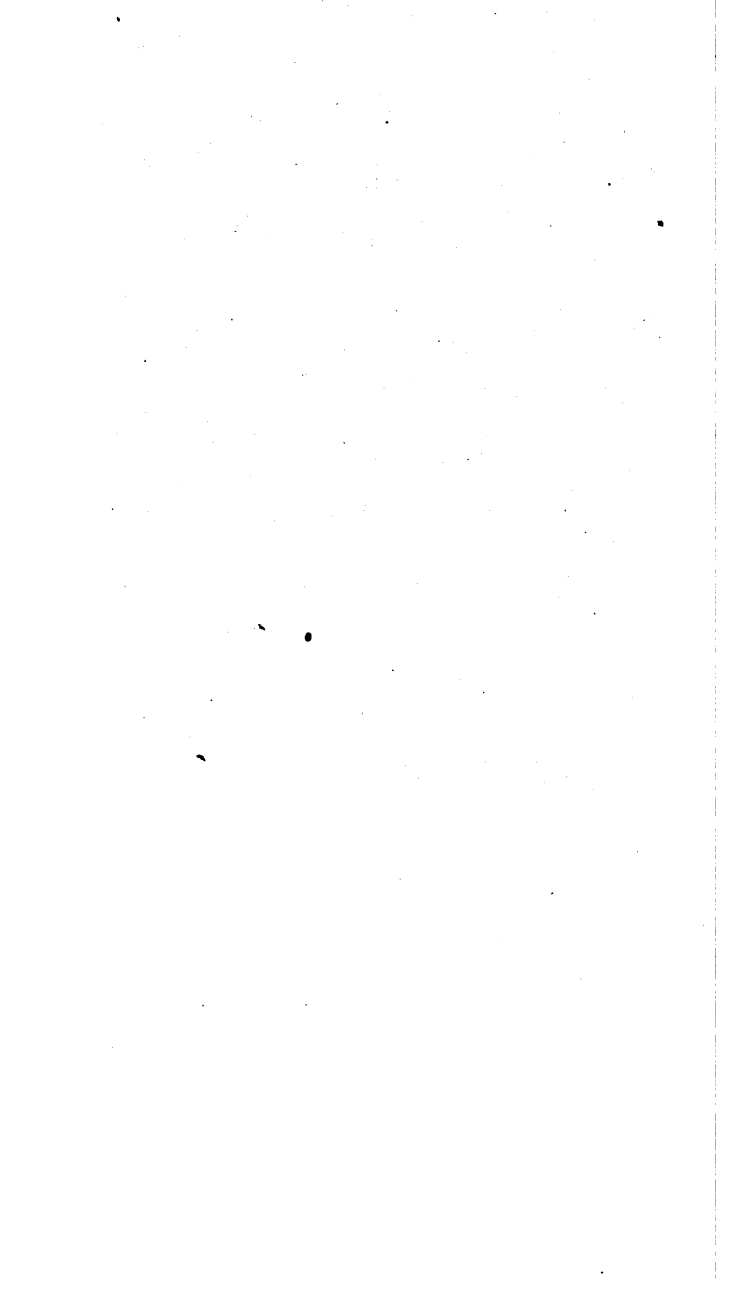
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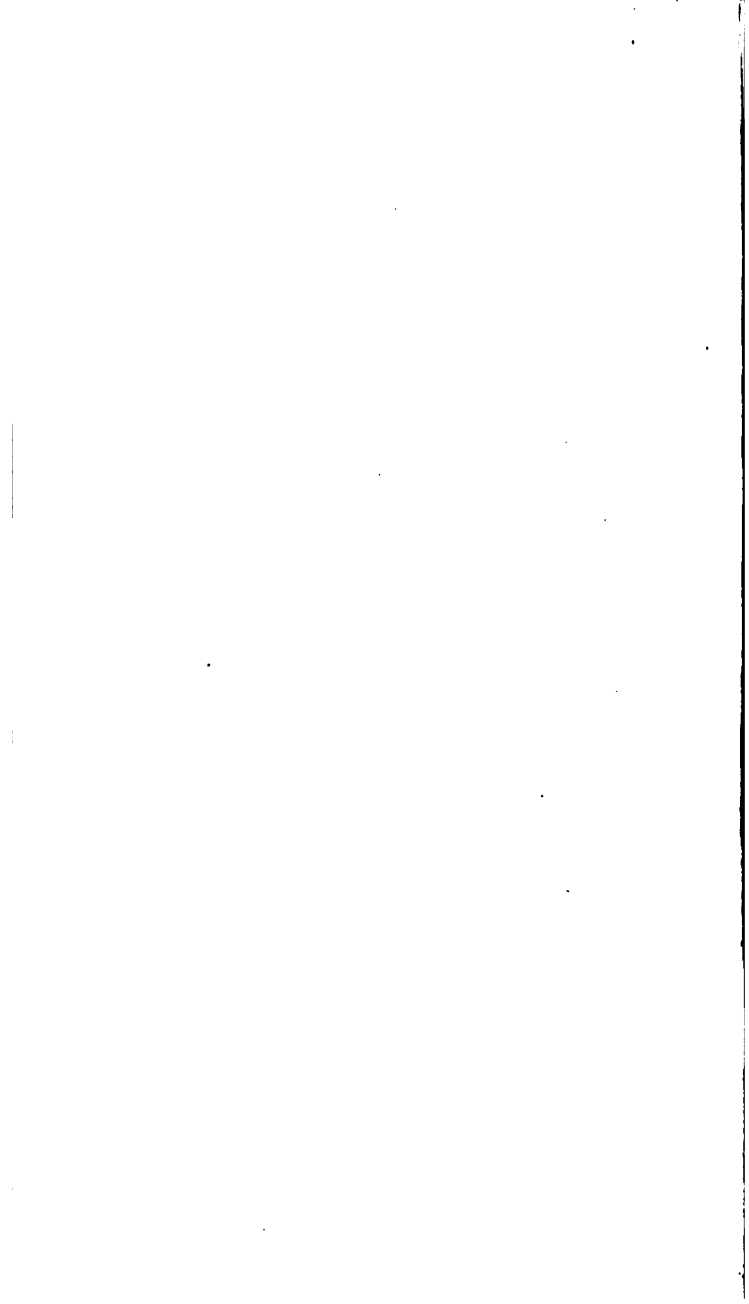
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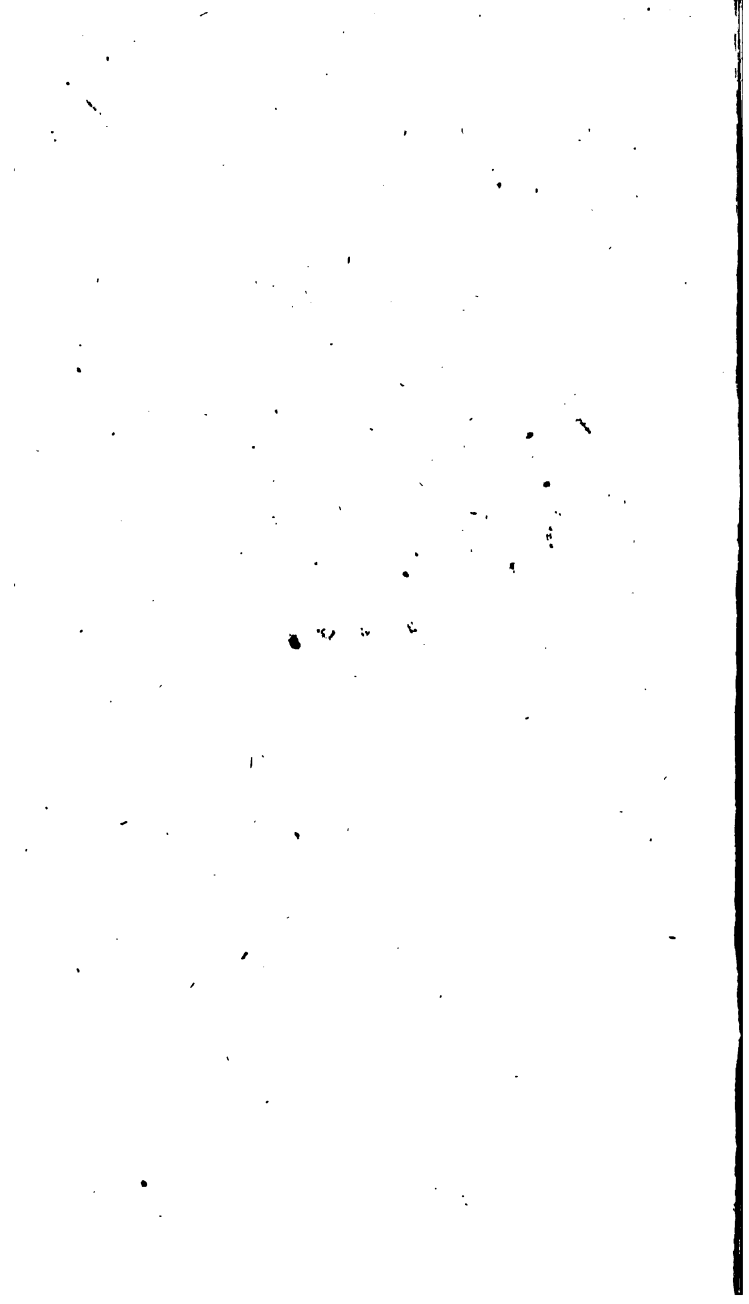
A Russell Pollock

Greenhill

8th October

1857

Dup. to
Be Kept



J. C. Wells
MEMOIRS *London*

OF THE
LIFE OF MRS. SUMBEL,
LATE
WELLS;

*Of the Theatres-royal, Drury-lane, Covent-garden,
and Haymarket.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

INCLUDING
HER CORRESPONDENCE WITH MAJOR TOPHAM,
MR. REYNOLDS THE DRAMATIST,
&c. &c. &c.

V O L. I.

" My soul abhors
The man, who breaks through Nature's sweetest laws;
Whose heart so callous to each tender tie,
So deaf to gratitude, to pity's sigh,
Can see that form he vilely has betray'd
Now pine in want, and never lend his aid.
Alas! much-injur'd, ... gen'rous WELLS,
How oft on thee my thought with sorrow dwells!
Accept a tear--'t is all I can bestow--
That, and to hate the author of thy woe."

Vide ANTHONY PASQUIN's "Pin-basket."

L O N D O N :

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1811.

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DEDICATION.

TO

MY GRANDCHILDREN,

AND

E. SAMUEL, ESQ.

MY GRANDCHILDREN,—*You may, at a future period, wish to ascertain your genealogy : in this book you will find it ; and, should your minds not be biassed by the illiberal conduct and instructions of your grandfather, you will respect your parents.*

MR. SAMUEL,—*I could not omit your name in my Dedication, as to you,*

DEDICATION.

*principally, this work owes its birth : —
you have, in a great measure, been the
occasion of the catalogue of miseries de-
tailed in it — you brought POVERTY
upon me, and, of course, I lost the affec-
tions of Major Topham.*

LEAH WELLS SUMBEL.

X

PREFACE.

(WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.)

WHOEVER peruses these volumes will have the most tender emotions of the heart excited at the tissue of distresses which the fair subject of them hath endured in her checquered passage through so much of life as Providence hath as yet permitted her to *endure*: and their indignation will be proportionately aroused to find that much of this misery hath been attributable to some INGRATES, who have the semblance of men, without those accompany-

ing attributes of *gratitude* and *honour*, which render their species estimable in the contemplation of the wise and the worthy!

If there be one object upon this planet who is more deserving of detestation than another, among keen and discerning individuals, but particularly with the generous orders of society, it is that being who can use his superior artifices, and his sophistry, to take an undue and *sordid* advantage of believing woman. We behold the hourly successes of libertinism with a sigh, because we are aware that one of the great buttresses of social good and order is weakened by the furtherance and indulgence of criminal passion: yet, as those passions are inalienably implanted in our system, we sometimes feel a faint apology

for such censurable deeds, from the conviction that we are all fallible, in a greater or a lesser degree, where the senses are forced into a collision with our reason. But it is impossible to fashion, or suppose, an excuse for those who can render their too *facile* triumph over the heart of an unsuspecting woman tributary to the worst purposes of meanness—who can step down from the pedestal of manhood so low as to use her purse, or her influence, or both, for their own personal aggrandisement; and eventually affect to scorn the benign source of their own comparative greatness, when the malice of fortune hath made her a point for the commiseration of the liberal; and when unpitying time had began to dim the lustre of her eyes, and remove the roses from her cheeks! I do not know

a term in language sufficiently marking and opprobrious to designate such vile *appearances of men*.

When this persecuted and forsaken lady was in the full meridian of her beauty and professional powers, the following portraiture was written by a *theatrical critic* who was gladdened and favoured by her intimacy.—

“ Come hither, ye Sculptors, and catch every grace *
That Fate interwove in a heaven-form'd face;
For 't is **WELLS**, the resistless, that bursts on the sight,
To wed infant Rapture and strengthen Delight.
When she smiles, Youth and Valour their trophies resign;
When she laughs, she enslaves—for that laugh is divine.
With the mien of an angel, she bids tumults cease:
Lo! she moves like the halcyon sister of Peace—
As her port by the influence of fear seems restricted;
And she looks like that Modesty *Guido* depicted!

* *Vide* “**THE CHILDREN OF THESPIS.**”

Her moist, pulpy lips, wear't a levelier hue
Than cherries new-wash'd with the morn's pearly dew;
Her Jove-killing charms would call Wrath from his deed,
Re-humanise TIMON, and fetter the SWEDE;
Meet the hope of Spain's CHARLES, from a diadem driv'n,
And by op'ning her bosom—receive him in heav'n!

“ Not the moon-beam to elfins, who dew-wetted trip;
Not the melon's cold juice to the Indian's parch'd lip;
Not the nut's balmy milk to the fowl in the wild;
Not the big-bellied clusters to *Semele's* child;
Not the honey-fraught leaf of the rose to the bee;—
Were, in rapture, so hail'd as her *Cowslip* by me!
Could *Anacreon* escape from Elysium's pure throng,
He'd weave her high name in his warm, deathless song:
And *Eatian* minstrels her gifts would rehearse,
In all the rich splendor of classical verse.

“ With myrtle-bound brows the blythe nymph is advancing;
And, touch'd by her smiles, the gay kiddings are dancing:
As the Sylvans pour forth, in their May vestments drest,
Their flocks rove at will, and their cots are unblest:
While Renown shews her *Helen* in dingy tradition,
And *Hebe* retreats, to avoid competition.

Despair leaves his cave, by her beauties imprest;
And Joy wounds the fiend that had sicken'd his breast :
Young poets, for her, fly th' imperial bays,
And, with Eloquence, pant in recording her praise :
Ses. Pride kiss her sandals, and Apathy sighs;
And Honor implores, and Inconstancy dies.

"Illumin'd and lovely the 'chantress appears,
If cloth'd with ineffable laughter or tears :
The sons of the Universe felt not such glee,
When the *Paphian* Goddess emerg'd from the sea,
And shook from her tresses the drops of the ocean,
And leap'd on the beach, to call Bliss into motion !
Those gales which old Eölus destin'd to rove
O'er the vale of *Amana*, and Lebanon grove,
Gull their turbulent chief, as *Hygeia* cheats death,
By stealing the incense which hallows her breath !
Yet hither, DISCRETION, and bid her beware
Of the Sensualist's wile—of the Sycophant's snare !
As her spotless-white mind is unconscious of art,
And Belief guards the portal that leads to her heart.
For there are who'd entangle her joy with her aim,
Till Perdition had sullied the page....of her fame ;

When the insincere praise, Desolation must follow;
As Serpents pre-slabber that victim they'd swallow.

"Oh Passion! that ever to weakness inclines—
Thou exquisite Tyrant, who damas our designs—
Say, why should you raze out the points of our pray'r,
Or lead such frail beings from peace . . . to despair?
Can thy conquest be envied as noble or glorious,
As angels drop tears when the sense is victorious?"

Such a charming being was Mrs. WELLS SUMBEL before the perfidy and ingratitude of the *lords of the creation* had invaded the repose of her bosom, and despoiled her of the reward of her rare faculties. But where is gratitude to be found?—not in the anatomy of mortal man!—I have heard of such a principle of action, and so I have of *Queen Mab*; but I could never ascertain the existence of either. It hath been fortunate for my peace and sensations, that,

whenever I rendered a service to a fellow-creature, it was in obedience to the behest of justice, or to please myself; for if my plains had waited to be fertilised by the streams of gratitude, all their powers of vegetation would have been annulled long since!

To those ladies who may be disposed to regard some of the irregular weaknesses of our heroine with a spirit of severity, we have to remark, that the purest manifestation of an excelling nature is visible, when the disposition to be kind impels the observer to breathe an atmosphere of charity over the errors of the unfortunate. There is a wide and palpable distinction between an unqualified approval of what is morally bad in system, and that lovely sort of sentiment which labours to analyse the causes

of a fortuitous deviation from rectitude in another, for the mild purposes of extenuation; from a conviction that the life of the sufferer hath been untinged by indelicacy, though not entirely unstained by folly.

P.

Sept. 6, 1811.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.—Page 16, five lines from bottom, for 'my' read 'her.'

----- two lines below, for 'of Birmingham' read 'is Birmingham.'

--- 171, three lines from bottom, read 'happiness he.'

--- 193, line 11, dele 'to.'

VOL. II.—Page 76, line 6, for 'is' read 'was.'

--- 123 -- 10, for 'heart' read 'hearts.'

--- 139 -- 10, for 'in the heart' read 'on the heart.'

--- 141 --- 8, for 'Colonel' read 'Captain.'

--- 159 -- 7, read 'were so far, &c.'

--- 171, last lines from bottom, for 'are pleasures' read 'is pleasure.'

--- 183, line 3, read 'unless he.'

--- 213, third line from bottom, Mrs. JORDAN's name should have been introduced: read 'Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, or John Kemble.'

MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MRS. SUMBEL.

AN illustrious pedigree is generally uppermost in the minds of actors and actresses. From their personating royalty, and being so often clothed in splendid dresses, they frequently imagine themselves what in mimic scenery they only represent. As I do not pretend to less vanity or more wisdom than my contemporaries of the sock and buskin, I beg leave to premise, that, in conjunction with the most no-

ble and ancient families on earth who boast of the unadulterated blood of ancestry, I am originally descended from . . . Adam and Eve.—Here I have to observe, with those who, like myself, are tenacious of family dignity, that the frailty and deviation of our original mother from the path of rectitude is a most insufferable opprobrium, never to be surmounted, and highly injurious to our delicate feelings.

As I can boast of honest parents, I will give of them a concise account.—My grandfather was a poor Welsh curate, a writer contemporary with Pope, and kept an academy in Soho-square: he had a large family; and, being very fond of pouring forth liba-

tions to Bacchus, expired while offering up his orisons to the jolly god. Mr. Thomas Davies, his eighth son, my father, was bred a carver and gilder, and had the honour of attending Mr. Garrick to Stratford-upon-Avon to dig up the root of the mulberry-tree, when only enough was found to make a box, which is now in the possession of Mr. Garrick's widow*. He had a medal given him for the design, which his partner carved, who at that time resided at Warwick, and my father at Birmingham. Young as I was, I can just recollect the carriages of the nobility and gentry who came from all parts to beg even sawdust or shavings

* See Appendix [A].

left of the root.—My mother's name was Deacon, a distant relation of Dr. Deacon, of Manchester, a family that suffered greatly in the rebellion of 1745.

To Mr. Yates, the proprietor and manager of the Birmingham theatre, and who was my father's particular friend, I am indebted for my first theatrical attempt: he prevailed on my mother to permit the servant to take my sister and myself to the play. The farce that made the first impression on me was the Padlock—Mrs. Wrighton, of Drury-lane theatre, played Leonora. My young heart never felt such pleasure before. I was singing next morning (though not six years old) “ *Little,*

foolish, fluttering thing," to the annoyance of the whole house. Mr. Yates, who did us the favour of being a visitor for the season, from the friendship subsisting between him and my father, observed, "I have listened to the child, and have no hesitation in saying, that nature has stamped her an actress."

My godfather, who gave me the name of Stephens, went over to India, and became immensely rich: he said, from the respect he bore his little goddaughter, through my mother's family, he would take care of me; but in his return from thence for a final settlement in his native country, if he did remember me, his kindness and himself went to the bottom of the sea; for the

ship, with every thing in it sunk. Early, therefore, in life, the chilling hand of misfortune lay on my infant head: but it lay lightly; for the pangs that may rend the heart of an adult leave that of the babe unmoved. Let me for a moment pause: the very next sentence will in part confute my own hypothesis. A scene of distress happened at this period, which neither time nor circumstances can ever efface from my memory; and the recollection of the sufferings of my much-loved parents at this distance of time chills my very blood, and makes me execrate the author of those miseries of my infant days.

My father's partner, Mr. Griffin,

lent him a sum of money, not from motives of goodness, humanity, or friendship, but, as it afterwards proved, for the most diabolical and basest of purposes.—Our happy family, busied in domestic concerns, my sister and self just preparing for school, were suddenly surprised by this unfeeling man's putting an execution in our house: every limb of my distressed father was paralysed; afterwards he became insane, and was conveyed to a mad-house, where the Almighty, looking with a pitying eye upon his sufferings, received his soul into that region of bliss which the virtuous path he had ever trod in life led him to hope for at his dissolution.

Mr. Griffin, accompanied by the

base executioners of the law, collected all the valuables of our house, even to my mother's trinkets and clothes; which that best of women perceiving, taking my sister and me by the hand, was about to leave, and say, "O sweet home, farewell!" When Mr. Griffin saw she was about to depart from her much-lamented home, he stepped towards her, and said, "Madam, you need not go—these things may still be yours—I will support both you and your family."—Figure to yourself, O reader! what a woman who had ever tenderly loved both her husband and her children, who ever looked upon the least deviation from virtue with abhorrence, must have felt at such an ex-

pression. She turned round, and, with a look of ineffable disdain, replied, "Wretch! view my much-injured family, and put such a question to me if you dare! I conceive those bailiffs assisting in your base design, though in the meanest situation on earth, exalted and virtuous when compared with you!" Upon which she departed, taking nothing from her house but my helpless sister and myself (my only brother being out at nurse), to Mr. Kingsley's, a worthy quaker and neighbour, who had kindly offered us an asylum.

A lady at Bristol, Mrs. Morgan, a schoolfellow of my mother's, offered to take either of her children under her care until there was some favourable

change in her circumstances. She, anxious to have one of her children with so good and faithful a friend, readily consented : it fell to the lot of my sister, who, under that good and worthy woman, received a liberal education, every comfort and happiness : while I, who have ever been the victim of some extraordinary event, was disposed of in the following manner. I must for a moment ask pardon for digressing, to say a few words on a subject which has employed the pen of every author in every country ; and as I have ever stood alone in my opinions through life, so I shall in this instance.—It has ever been a favourite theory of the writers of romances, novels, or plays, to en-

gage our feelings by holding to view some old and faithful domestic, grown grey in servitude, bringing forth the savings of his youthful days to relieve the unforeseen distresses of his master. That such a thing may have occurred, I believe; but that it springs from a real, sincere, and disinterested regard, I deny. Born in a low and grovelling situation of life, menials merely conceive the misfortunes that may have occurred like a summer's cloud, that will shortly disappear; the low illiterate mind sees not beyond a day; friendship can exist but in genial souls and equality of condition.—A servant of the name of Sally, who had remained long enough in my father's service to amass money, and

who seemed to feel, equally with ourselves, our calamitous situation (and, as she had nursed my sister and myself, we felt a great affection for her), along with every thing else that was dear to us, was about to depart. Her sister, who lived in London in the service of Mrs. Alfry, a schoolfellow of my mother's, in Warwick-street, Golden-square, about to leave her place to tie the connubial knot, wrote to her that she might succeed her, and that her mistress would be glad if my mother would permit me to come and stay with her till her affairs were settled. Pleased with the idea of having her two children under the protection of such good friends, and being in the house with

so old and faithful a domestic, considering also Mrs. Alfry's respectability, my mother consented; and doomed I was to go, under the care of Sally, to London—London! the source of all my griefs, of all my joys!

We arrived in Warwick-street, and entered the dwelling of the amiable and kind Mrs. Alfry—for kind she always was to me *indeed*, which ever shall be remembered

“While Mem'ry holds a seat in this distracted brain!”

though that tenderness was scarcely sufficient, afterwards, to compensate for the brutal treatment of Sally, who, having no longer any thing to fear or hope from my scattered family, or the presence of my mother, treated me

with the greatest cruelty, unknown to Mrs. Alfry. Long since have I learned, by sad experience, that, for the female part of a family, a mother's presence is absolutely necessary: formed by nature of weaker materials than man, both in mind and body, females are solely swayed by example; then who so capable of giving them a good one as a fond and endearing mother?

The harmless worm, when hurt, will endeavour to return the injury. The base Sally was like all bad people, who, having once entered the path of vice, fearlessly go on, till, the measure of their iniquities being full, they involve themselves in inevitable ruin. Her persecution of me not being sufficient,

to satiate her evil mind, she began to steal the wine, &c.; and, as gratitude has ever been a predominant passion in my bosom, I thought it my duty to inform my second mother, in consequence of which she was immediately discharged. As, however, it was not her memoirs I sat down to write, but my own, I shall leave her to look after another place, and proceed.—

Mr. Yates, the sincere and faithful friend of my family, conceiving my mother, from her accomplishments and beautiful figure, might answer for the stage, prevailed on her to try the part of Indiana in the *Conscious Lovers*, and gave her that night as a free benefit. She appeared—but not to speak.

her part. From her exemplary conduct, and well-known virtuous life (which a British people, to their eternal honour, know so well how to appreciate), the house was filled in all parts. A heart full to the very brim, and overflowing with gratitude to the worthy and respectable inhabitants of Birmingham, deprived her of the power of utterance; her tongue refused its friendly assistance, and she retired amidst the plaudits of a sympathising audience. —To this day, in retracing the events of more youthful periods, when relating this circumstance, my eyes fill, to sacrifice a tear at the shrine of gratitude, on the base of which is the motto of Birmingham, the dear scene of my infant gambols.

On the following morning Mr. Yates informed my mother he did not think she would ever be fit for a theatre; and enquired after the little girl whom, some years before, he had heard singing "*Little, foolish, fluttering thing.*" The expression he had formerly made use of on that occasion struck her most forcibly: she informed him of the place of my retreat, when it was agreed I should be sent for, to try my fortune before that just but awful tribunal—a British audience!

Mr. Wild, a respectable clergyman of Bristol, and son to the lady with whom my sister resided, going to London on business, was requested by my mother to call on my patroness to ap-

prise her of my future destination, and send me down to Birmingham. The good old lady, with that prejudice so common in the world against people going on the stage, exclaimed it was sending me to destruction—brought out her will, in which I had been favourably mentioned, and scratched her pen across my name.—I have ever been the sport of *Fortune*, and in this instance I think I had great reason to accuse her of persecution.

I collected my wardrobe, which was so extensive as to take up an entire sheet of brown paper, dropped a tear of gratitude at separating from my dear Mrs. Alfry, and departed. I set off that night in the coach, under the

protection of a Mrs. Sandeman, keeper of the ~~open~~ to the ~~queens~~ of the Birmingham theatre, where I arrived with a beating heart.

My first essay in a theatre was in the character of the Duke of York, in Richard the Third, which part was that night filled by Mr. Farren. The public and the papers of the day were pleased to express their approbation of my first juvenile attempt. My second was in Cupid, in the Trip to Scotland. My third, Prince Arthur, in King John. I continued for some time to wear the breeches; but, strange to tell, though so long a boy, I never arrived at the honour of the *Toga Virilis**.

* The *Toga Virilis* was a cloak of distinction

I beg leave to mention one circumstance here, which, as it settles a green-room controversy between me and Lady Derby, I hope my readers will pardon my craving their attention.—We have long had a difference, as to which of us has the honour of reckoning the greatest number of Christmas-days in this transitory world*. As she is long past the grand climacteric, and I am fast verging to that period, it is necessary it should be settled at some time or other; and as an opportunity may not
worn by the Roman youth when they arrived at the state of manhood.

* The negroes in the West Indies calculate their age by the number of Christmas-days they can remember. I fancy her ladyship wishes to forget many.

offer till we meet in those regions where infinity of time does away with fixed periods, I think there is none better than the present. As I was considered by Mr. Yates too young to take any female parts, I played the Duke of York in his theatre, when her ladyship played Indiana (a woman's part) at the theatre of Younger, to whom she had the honour of serving her time, the same season. Reader, decide between us.—

The Birmingham theatre closing for the season, my mother determined upon visiting her native city, Bath. The respectability of her connections, and Mr. Yates offering his friendly interference with Mr. Palmer, the manager,

were sufficient inducements. We set out, arrived, and were received by our relations in the kindest manner. Mr. Palmer gave me an engagement: though the salary was small (an humble five shillings per night), still the circumstance is sufficient to prove to the world that my theatrical career did not commence among strollers, like the and—My favourite dog has jumped on the table; and, by overturning the inkstand upon my manuscript, has blotted out names I do not think worth renewing; for, as I have ever bowed with submission to the opinion of the public, I might incur—what it has been during my whole life my study to avoid—their displeasure, by tracing

the origin of people so lately, and still remaining, under the lash of their just indignation.

Mr. Garrick, being this season at Bath, made overtures to my mother to take me as an apprentice: her answer was, "If others chose to apprentice their children to the stage, she did not, considering it a sure road to the destruction of the innocence of her child."

The first girl's part I played was Sukey Chitterling, in Harlequin's Invasion. Miss Young—the late Mrs. Pope, who united elegance of manners with the most graceful acting—gave me great encouragement: she has frequently taken me on her knee, observ-

ing, she was certain I should one day make an actress. The notice of such a lady gave me great hopes of succeeding in the profession: I ever felt for her the regard of a mother. This lady is almost the only exception, of all the female performers, in whom I experienced an uniformity of conduct, from the child in Isabella, to Isabella herself, which I played at Covent-garden theatre. As she was pleased to express her approbation of my performance of that part—so unlike a certain great actress, of whom I shall speak hereafter, who sat in the green-boxes with a countenance that indicated the jealous workings of her narrow mind—I beg leave to insert an extract from the Morning

Chronicle of the day following my having appeared in that character.—

“ On Thursday night Mrs. WELLS made her
 “ appearance in Isabella; and, although the
 “ audience went with such strong prejudices in
 “ favour of the fashionable Melpomene, yet
 “ never did Mrs. Siddons draw more genuine
 “ tears from an audience. It is impossible to
 “ conceive what a high-finished picture this
 “ lady gave of Isabella’s woes, and how nearly
 “ she arrived to nature in almost every scene.
 “ There were no studied pauses, to purchase,
 “ by vacancy of time, the approving hands of
 “ the audience, and yet the house echoed with
 “ repeated marks of approbation. Her shriek
 “ at the discovery of Biron had a good effect,
 “ but was rather that of terror without amaze-
 “ ment, than of terror and amazement mixed.
 “ When the public consider that this Mrs. Wells
 “ is that Mrs. Wells who performed Cowslip,

“ they will scarcely credit the assertion, that
 “ in some parts she was equal, in some superior,
 “ and not in many inferior, to Mrs. Siddons.
 “ She has a beautiful face, with most expressive
 “ features, which no doubt are much in her
 “ favour; but that in which she excels, is her
 “ following nature, and concealing all the study
 “ of art in representing the character. — Little
 “ Edwin, the youngest son of the great Edwin,
 “ performed the part of the boy of Biron, and
 “ looked like a cherub. His attitude in the dying
 “ scene was at once beautifully picturesque and
 “ naturally attractive.”

Mr. Woodfall, the proprietor of
 that paper, instigated me to play tra-
 gedy; the part allotted to me was
 Alicia: but Mrs. Siddons refused to
 play Jane Shore with me; upon which
 Mr. King, the manager of Drury-lane

theatre, advised me to play the part myself. On the reason for Mrs. Siddons's refusal I shall make no comment.

The next winter, accompanied by my mother, I went to York, Mr. Yates having given me a recommendation to Mr. Wilkinson, the manager of the theatre of that city. On our arrival we were much disappointed to find that a Miss Frodgham, daughter of a favourite actor of that place, had been already engaged. But, from the respectability of our introductions, the manager engaged me for three nights, and allowed me on the third to send in tickets, which turned out much to our

advantage, as we were upon friendly terms with some of the first families, from whom we received many marks of kindness and regard : to Mr. Maud we felt ourselves particularly indebted. Here, I first learned dancing, from Miss West, afterwards Mrs. Suet, who kindly taught me gratuitously : she was then the principal dancer in the theatre, and taught in the city.

Mr. Wilkinson recommended us to Mr. Butler, who kept a strolling company at Harrowgate, Rippon, and Pontefract, from whom both my mother and myself received an engagement. We arrived at a very seasonable time, the company being greatly deficient in dresses, and my mother having brought

with her an extensive assortment. Thus began my strolling; and as most, if not all, of our first-rate performers have either sprung from, or at some period or other joined, a strolling company, I could not think of making myself the only exception in that particular.

The lady who had the management of this company for a number of years married a Mr. Butler, a worthy man, who was at that time younger than her two daughters, the eldest of whom, Mrs. Wallace, afterwards gave to the world the young lady of that name, whose merit and virtue were so highly and justly appreciated at Covent-garden, and in which she trod in the steps of her mother. She was pa-

tronised by the late Lord and Lady Loughborough, and has since married a Captain Campbell, a gentleman of respectability and fortune.

Her second daughter married a Mr. Tallure, a respectable man, and leader of our band. He played first, second, and third fiddle; and though he did not rival Weischel, he justly conceived that a superfluity of instruments would be inconvenient in a small theatre, so that we were never incommoded with any more than he thought proper to play himself.

Contrary to the custom of *kings* and *queens* of strolling companies, who ever make it a rule to keep their subjects at a great distance, my mother and self

were often invited to Mrs. Butler's table; but a young lady, a distant relation of hers, coming among us, she was so highly received into favour, that I was for some time kept in the background; at which my mother was so displeased, that she applied to Messrs. Crump and Chamberlain, the managers of a company at Cheltenham. I received an engagement from them, and played Juliet in that very barn in which Mrs. Siddons played in her youthful days, after leaving her place as lady's-maid to Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Greathead of Warwick.

As I have just recollected a curious circumstance, long in circulation, respecting Mrs., I cannot pass

it over in silence, though I hope it is erroneous; and am happy to do justice to that lady's *merits*; as from it she is accused of wanting *charity* and *feeling*.—

Her mother, far advanced 'in that state in which ladies wish to be who love their lords,' while performing the part of Caliban in the *Tempest*, in a barn, was taken in travail, and delivered of a female child: the part was so admirably adapted to her natural disposition, and she performed it so well, as to inspire the infant stranger with the feelings and sentiments of it, which she still retains, and, as she is too old to think of mending, I fear ever will.

But what has given rise to the people about the theatres believing her in-

spired by the sentiments of her mother, is as follows :—A poor dresser having her little all consumed by fire, and her helpless family reduced to starvation, applied to the performers for a trifling subscription, which she received from all but the offspring of Caliban. It is also reported of her—but I *hope* without foundation, as it so nearly concerns every one who may adopt the profession of a performer, from the Prince of Denmark to the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*—that when applied to for something towards the fund for the relief of decayed actors, she declined giving any thing, saying, ‘ She was sure she should never want assistance from any such fund ! ’

Thus, from two such *trifling* circumstances, has the modern Melpomene been accused of want of feeling, humanity, and charity—the most elegant attributes of the human breast. Should this be true, the immense void they leave must, by the order of things, be filled up by others.

The next season I obtained an engagement at Gloucester, where I played Juliet the second time: my Romeo was a Mr. Wells, being the second time of his appearance in that character. We fell in love with each other, and rose from the tomb of the Capulets, happy

in the idea of having inspired a mutual attachment. The knot was tied the next season at Shrewsbury, in St. Chad's church, much against the will of my mother, which I had great reason to regret. After my marriage I prevailed on Mr. Wells to send for my sister to Bristol, who, with my mother, accompanied us to Exeter, where we had got an engagement. Shortly after our arrival, Mr. Wells sent me to my mother, with the following laconic and feeling epistle.—

“ Madam,

“ As your daughter is too young and childish, I beg you will for the present take her again under your protection; and be assured I shall return to her soon, as I am now going a short journey: and remain,

“ Yours, &c.”

My mother treated me with great kindness ; and often do I reflect upon the efforts of those my youthful days with pleasure, as they were the means of affording a comfortable subsistence to her, my sister, and brother.

Shortly after my husband's departure I obtained a benefit, which was very crowded ; and, from the seasonable supply of money I received, I determined to visit London for a fortnight, as our company was going to Totness, whither I did not choose to accompany them for that time.

As I was very anxious to see the performances at the London theatres, then open, and still more anxious to assume my altered situation of being

my own mistress, I hastened my departure, which my mother saw with a heavy heart. Scarcely had I reached the metropolis, and had time to sit down to my supper at Osborne's hotel, when a gentleman arrived in a chaise and four from Exeter, induced by the extreme uneasiness of my mother, to put me under the protection of my husband's brother, Mr. Wells of Staple's-inn. I went with him to Mr. Wells's; but what was my astonishment to find that my husband had just left there, in company with a woman whom he had passed as his wife, and who I afterwards learned was my bride's-maid! in consequence of which I was under the necessity of producing the certificate of

my marriage to undeceive that worthy man, which ever after caused a coolness between the brothers, and I was always received with great politeness.

Thus behold me deprived of the company of the man whose duty it was to succour and protect me, at an age (for I was then only eighteen) when he should have been not only a husband, but a father—at that time of life when he might have taught ‘the young idea how to shoot.’ I therefore appeal to that just and generous tribunal, the public, if many of the circumstances of my afterlife ought not to be thrown into the back-ground of oblivion. Young as I then was, I cannot describe my situa-

tion better than by repeating the beautiful line of Pope in his *Eloisa*—

“ Now warm in youth, now with’ring in my bloom.”

After residing a short time in London, I had the pleasure of being introduced to Mr. Colman, who prevailed on me to play Madge in *Love in a Village* *. I next attempted Mrs. Cadwallader in *The Author*. From the flat-

* “ Mrs. Wells appeared for the first time in
“ Madge at this theatre. This lady has establish-
“ ed her fame as an actress in characters of this
“ nature ; and her last performance of Margery
“ confirms the final decision stands good. In
“ the dance she moved the first character in rus-
“ ticity, which the audience proved by almost
“ continual plaudits.”—*Public Advertiser*.

tering reception I met with in these two characters, Mr. Colman was induced to prevail on me to give up my engagement at Exeter, and enter into one with him, to which I was also persuaded by the celebrated Mr. O'Keefe. His proposals were so handsome that I could not refuse, and accordingly agreed ; on which I sent for my mother and sister.

My next appearances were as Molly in *The English Merchant*, Jenny in *Lionel* and *Clarissa*, with *Becky* alternately. Shortly after this, Mr. Colman reversed the *Beggar's Opera*, Mrs. Cargill being the *Macheath*—the eccentricity of which produced crowded houses, and the play had a great run—in the midst of which she eloped with the son

of the manager. His distress at this moment can scarcely be conceived : he applied to Miss Harper (now Mrs. Bannister), the only singer disengaged from the piece, and requested her to undertake the part ; but she, never having appeared in man's attire, refused. Notwithstanding my not being a professed singer, and having only three days to prepare, I came out in it.—The flattering reception I met with will ever be remembered by me with heartfelt gratitude.

I shall take the liberty of inserting the critique which appeared in the Morning Chronicle (then the property of Mr. Woodfall) the day following my performance.—

THEATRICALS.

BEGGAR'S OPERA REVERSED!

"God has given you one face, and ye make yourselves another."

"Holding the elder Bannister high in our opinion, and accustomed to his rough notes at certain convivial orgies called the 'Beef-steak,' the 'Anacreontic,' &c. &c. we could not help taking a tender glance at him in poor Polly, and the rosy-faced Edwin in Lucy. Alas! that this should be the side of the Haymarket, where distinctions should be lost, and the sexes be forgotten! Why is it that the kindred talents of Mr. Colman thus violate the respectable manes of poor Gay, and turn his labours into farce?—Wandering over this waste of talents, we saw nothing to reconcile us to its absurdity but the abundant excellence of Mrs.

“ Wells’s Macheath — excelled undoubtedly, in
 “ point, of voice, or at least in knowledge of mu-
 “ sic, but in point of action, feeling, and ex-
 “ pression of that feeling, we recollect not any
 “ thing that has surpassed her. Dear to our
 “ remembrance is the recollection of Mrs. Cargill
 “ in this part; and when the bell tolled for exe-
 “ cution, who wept not for her? But, taking the
 “ whole of the part together, we confess, till we
 “ saw Mrs. Wells, we never totally forgot the
 “ absurdity of the scene.”

Mr. O’Keefe, on our first introduction,
 kindly promised to write a part
 for me: he kept his word, and wrote,
 expressly for me, Cowslip, in The
 Agreeable Surprise, which I played
 alternately with Macheath.* At the
 end of a very productive season, Mr.

* See Appendix [B].

Colman pressed me to sign articles for four years: inexperienced as I was, and fully relying on his honour for settling with me for the time preceding, I complied. Upon his demanding what I expected, I left it entirely to himself; when he replied, every thing should be settled to my satisfaction. But, like an honourable gentleman lately deceased, his settling-day, I suppose, must be after the day of resurrection, as it has not yet come, nor do I think it ever will in this world. I must most certainly accuse Mr. Colman of the grossest ingratitude to me, having during the season rendered him essential services: even if I had rendered him no other than risking my reputation by playing Macheath (the very clothes

for which character I bought out of my own pocket), or an engagement with the winter managers, it will surely be admitted that I had a strong claim both on his honour and generosity. The following letter, which I happen to have preserved, will perhaps serve to shew that I was regarded as of some consequence to his theatre.—

“ Dear Madam,

“ I MEANT to have sent to you early this morning, but illness prevented me.

“ I really don't know how to answer your request. The business of the week is not arranged. From Edwin's and Mrs. Webb's illness, and the new play being delayed, and benefits intervening, it is impossible for me to say whether the theatre will or will not want want your assistance.

"I am extremely sorry for your indisposition, and could wish to settle every thing for your convenience; but, under all these circumstances, I confess I should not be very easy if you were absent from town, when it is possible, and probable, that contingencies may oblige me to call upon you at a short notice.

"I am, Madam,

"Your obedient and faithful

"humble servant,

"*Sunday morning.*"

"G. COLMAN."

"MRS. WELLS."

Here let me caution every young performer against the promises of managers; for had I not at this time experienced the liberality of the public, in a great benefit, I know not what I should have done.

The season at the Haymarket be-

ing concluded, I engaged with Mr. Ford and Mr. Sheridan, at Drury-lane, for four years. My first appearance was in Nancy in *The Camp*; and, with Mr. Linley's able instructions in the songs, I began to make a small progress in the vocal line. The next part I played was Jenny in *The Gentle Shepherd*, which had a great run, from the beautiful Mrs. Cargill playing Patty, and Miss Phillips (late Mrs. Crouch) the part of Peggy. The third character which Mr. Sheridan desired me to study was the Irish Widow. Mr. Moody, with his usual good-nature towards young performers, volunteered his services to teach me the *slippery**.

* Irish brogue.

I then thought it too great a part to undertake after the celebrated Mrs. Barry, for whom the part was originally written. The greatest criterion of my success is, that I had the honour of having it commanded by their majesties. The following week I was sent the part of Jacintha in *The Suspicious Husband*.

On my attending the rehearsal, Miss Farren came into the green room, and, staring me in the face, exclaimed —“ Good God, ma'am! are *you* to play Jacintha?” Upon my answering in the affirmative, she turned round to Mr. Younger (who was then acting manager), and said, “ Sir, I shall give up the part of Clarinda, as I am sure

Mrs. Wells will never be capable of such a character as she has undertaken." Stung to the very heart at such an expression from a woman who had only lately emancipated *herself* from the trammels of a strolling company, I threw down the part, and went home ; which I had scarcely reached, before I received a letter importing that I must study it, and likewise that Miss Farren *must* play with me — which she was obliged to do, to her no small mortification.

Had she possessed one atom of feeling, she would have recollected that I was the sole support of a mother, a sister, and brother—that to me they looked up for every thing. She would

have praised my laudable efforts, and, if it were from no other motive but that of *humanity*, she would have endeavoured to encourage me under such circumstances—for to young actresses encouragement from their *seniors* is a stimulus which enables them to go through their part with more confidence, or at least with more *impudence*; and if I may judge from Miss Farren's acting, she must have had great encouragement indeed. Shortly after, Mr. Pratt presented the managers with the play of *The Fair Circassian*, which part Mr. Sheridan allotted me, in consequence of Mrs. Barry having quitted the theatre. Mr. Pratt objected to me, on account of my little experience in

tragedy in London, and in consequence withdrew the piece for a time; but Miss Farren afterwards performed it to very bad houses: however, if she gained no credit by it, she at least had the satisfaction of viewing her picture in every caricature-shop in London.

This year was remarkable for two singular events — Herschel gave to astronomy a new planet, and the Kemble family to the theatrical hemisphere a star of the first magnitude, the great Mrs. Siddons—for the most prejudiced must allow her to be one of the first tragic actresses that ever graced any stage. She procured, by her interest in the theatre, the secondary parts for her sister, Miss Fanny Kemble (now Mrs.

Twiss); and as her family have ever been in the extreme, she was the worst actress that ever appeared on any *boards*. The expressions of the *gods* concerning her were, that she would make the very booths at Bartholomew-fair blush for her performance; she was, in fact, so *damned* by the public, that she quitted the stage, and never afterwards appeared on it, but to peep through the hole in the green curtain. On her receding, the secondary parts were offered to me; but Mrs. Siddons, to shew her *greatness* to *little* things, refused to play with me: — thus was a second attempt made to nip the infant blossom in the bud. Such efforts were almost sufficient to break the heart of a

person possessed of less fortitude than myself: but I have ever been and ever shall be a predestinarian: I firmly believe that at our birth Providence has laid out the diagram of our future lives, in which every trouble forms an angle; allowing this hypothesis, I am sure the reader of these lines will allow my angles are not few. As the secondary parts were thus shut against me, I was strenuously advised by my friends to try the first; which I did shortly after for my own benefit, that night playing Jane Shore to a crowded audience, who were pleased to approve of this my first effort; in consequence of which the managers gave me the part of Imogen, in Cymbeline—a very arduous task for a

young performer. The following critique appeared on the occasion : —

“ MRS. WELLS having manifested to the town,
 “ that she was endowed with talents for tragedy,
 “ the managers, with becoming regard for the
 “ entertainment of the public, brought the lady
 “ forward in the character of Imogen. The face
 “ and figure of Mrs. Wells were admirably suited
 “ to the part : nothing could be more exquisite-
 “ ly fascinating than her air, set off by the sim-
 “ plicity of the habit ; she had all its ‘ rosy pu-
 “ dency’ and soft enchantment. In passages,
 “ her tones and feelings were most impressive :
 “ she subdued the heart with more than one of
 “ the pathetic sentences of the part ; and, had
 “ she been equal throughout, we should have
 “ with truth announced her as a rival in excel-
 “ lence with the proudest on the stage. This
 “ however, was not the case : after touching the
 “ tenderest feelings of our frame, she sunk into

“ a simpering tone of expression which destroy-
 “ ed the integrity of the character. This arose
 “ from her inexperience in tragedy : it is not an
 “ easy thing to acquire the powers of modula-
 “ tion, and the pauses, breaks, grace, and music
 “ of eloquence. She has the faculties of a tra-
 “ gedian, and, with culture, will do great things.
 “ Last night she was not so uniformly well as
 “ with her talents she might be. Her declama-
 “ tion was generally too rapid, and at times in-
 “ discriminate. She failed in those distinguish-
 “ ing cadences which ornament the discourse
 “ that they make intelligible. Her essay, no
 “ doubt, was trying : it was an arduous situa-
 “ tion ; and she must have been agitated by per-
 “ sonal feelings, as well as by those of Imogen.
 “ A mind alarmed must necessarily hurry : the
 “ fear which gives celerity to our heels gives
 “ swiftness to our words also, and makes them
 “ run on without array or discipline. When she
 “ is rendered familiar with tears—and it is only

“ upon the stage that we wish her to form the
 “ intimacy—when she is no longer subject to the
 “ squint-eyed criticism of those who come to
 “ wonder at the tragedy of Cowslip, she will de-
 “ monstrate a capacity for the most elevated
 “ branch of the theatric art.” — *From the Chro-
 nicle edited by Mr. Woodfall.*

After my engagement I was obliged to study in private, to fill up the chasm of a defective education, which, with my theatrical duties, occupied my entire time. Before the close of the season my benefit was announced, and I was presented with an epilogue by a Mr. Topham, an officer in the life-guards, for the occasion. I ever ad-

mired great abilities and learning, as I knew, by my own feelings, the want of them—regarding as a superior order of being that person who possessed those elegant accomplishments in which I was so deficient.

The different necessary interviews we had, from my frequently rehearsing the epilogue before him, created a mutual esteem between us. I was captivated with the beauty of his mind: he made me an offer of his hand; but, as we could not be legally united in this kingdom, he proposed going to Italy: I listened to his offer, and as at the time I believed him sincere—his being so much older than myself induced me to think he would continue his regard

to the end of our lives—I accepted it. But, fortunately for him, the commotions on the Continent (an occurrence I did not advert to when I made the promise) prevented our immediate departure, which, from constant procrastination, was at length obliterated from the tablet of his memory. Under the impression of his honourable intentions towards me, when circumstances enabled him to perform his engagement, I removed to his house, unknown to my mother. But that woman who can confidently listen to the empty promises of *man* deserves every misery this world can inflict ; and were my sex to know the constant wretchedness that universally attends the slightest deviation from

the path of rectitude, they would at the moment sooner end their existence, and trust to the mercy of their Creator for such conduct, than once put faith in the base betrayer of their honour.

We resided in Bryanstone-street for three years, where I became the mother of two lovely children. Thence we removed to Beaufort-buildings, where he established a newspaper called *The World*. I have, in the course of conversation, often heard the expression, *seen a great deal of the world*; but, for my part, I saw *too much of it*—for the principal burden of carrying it on fell at last upon my shoulders, as the following letters of Mr. Topham to me will prove.—

" My Dear Pud,

" I WISH you joy on all being over, and on a boy—this is right. Pray take care of yourself, and when you have been quiet some time, *take care of THE WORLD*. Thank Simon for an obliging letter to me; he certainly can be of service, theatrically. When he writes to Lord Valentia, he may say we have received no answer from the Post Mail, in Dublin, about the papers. Merry came here last night.

" I shall be glad to hear of your being recovered.

" Yours ever, (the post going),

" E. T."

" MRS. WELLS."

" My best Pud,

" PRAY let me know how you are. I fear you are not so well as I could wish.

If you wish to see me, I will come to town immediately. I think it is not improbable that business of the office may bring me to town in a few days. But at all events let me know how you are.

"Be kind enough to deliver the inclosed letter to Mr. Smith. I never hear from him, and I am afraid he never visits the office.

"Tell Brydges that he may acquaint Mr. Wilkie (the late publisher) I have received his letter, and must, previous to any answer to it, have the money due from him to me, on Mr. F. Parker's account, discharged. This Brydges must get.

"Harriet improves every hour in knowledge;

"Yours ever,

"E. T^{OP}—."

"My dear Pud may send Este one of the hares—keep the other and the pheasant."

"MRS. WELLS,

" Dear Pud,

" **THANK** *Este* for the introduction to Parliament; and desire that a proof may be shewn to you, who will shew it to somebody else, of the ode, that it may be printed correctly.

" Yours ever,

" **E. T.**"

" **MRS. WELLS.**

" **My dearest and best Pud,**

" **I HAVE** written to

Bell to enquire what this summons about a trespass means, and to beg he will inform me of it. On *Saturday next*, for a certainty, if alive, you will see me for the winter.

" Pray ask **Mr. Samuel** if he reported **Mr. Ryder's** speech the first day? If he did, request him, from me, to put his observations, when there

are any, at the conclusion of the speech, separate, and in Italics.

" If he reported that first day in the House of Lords, tell him it was very well done, and just as I should wish it in future.

" Lest the same mistake of mixing the observations with the speech itself, as in that of *Mr. Ryder's*, should again occur—should Mr. Samuel not have reported that speech, mention what I now say to M^r Millan, that he may always put the observation in Italics, and distinct from the speech itself. God bless you! How does Christie? Am I an honest man any longer?

" Elwes takes this—the inclosed about *Monsieur Calonne* must be in soon, and the letter sent to Bell.

" E. T."

" MRS. WELLS."

Monday, October 22d.

" My dear Pud,

" ENCLOSED I have sent you a copy of the letter I this day wrote to Palmer. Perhaps you will think I have been quick with him ; but if the man has either common sense or common honesty, he will not hesitate a moment. If you do not hear from him in the *proper way*, I will send you his answer to me, which will determine my conduct very instantaneously. I hope *Este* knows nothing of Bell's absurd letter. I have written and told him I have settled the business with Mr. Samuel, whom I would advise, as soon as the courts of law open, to go there, and practise a little to himself the habit of remembering and putting it down afterwards.

" There has been a good deal in the paper on the subject of boxing. Old Broughton lives by the water-side, at Lambeth. If Samuel, for his

amusement, has a mind to walk there and get a few historical anecdotes of boxing from Broughton, of and about the men in his time, it would be a good article.

“ From Bell’s letter I cannot make out what it is that he alludes to. Has *Este* written anything out of the House that is not right? Tell me if he has; and send me Saturday’s paper, for the office have either not sent it to me or it has miscarried. At all events, let me have the paper; though I have told Mr. Bell, as he does not specify to what he alludes, I cannot speak to the subject.

“ Mr. Bell says, he has not heard of any stables for me: I suppose you have enquired too, and will continue to do so. Perhaps, if you should go to Crook’s, the coach-maker in Great Queen-street, to see the carriage, he may know of such a thing and tell you of it.

“ In my Friday’s paper I see the court-martial; pray was that sent to me, or was it

communicated through another channel?—I mean the court-martial on Major Browne.

“ I hear with great pleasure that the numbers of *The World*, printed on Friday, were two thousand six hundred. There’s credit for you, you old Pud !

“ Yours,

“ E. T.”

“ MRS. WELLS.”

“ My dear Pud,

“ I AM very sorry to hear you have been ill. I hope you are better; though you are very short.

“ Pray tell Mr. Smith that Captain Williamson, being otherwise engaged, is no longer concerned with the paper, and therefore is to have a salary no longer.

“ I trust by this time I shall have had an answer about the stables. Tomorrow, or Friday,

I shall send you a woodcock for yourself, and a hare for Mr. Pigou, in Berners-street, Oxford-street, which were killed on Monday last: so you will eat them accordingly.

" You may tell Mr. Smith, that as the receipt on advertisements is now growing very considerable, I hope his payments into the bankers are so, for I have had no account.

" Tell Mr. Samuel to proceed regularly with Monsieur Calonne's book, that we may get through most of it before the meeting of parliament.

" Anna sends her love, and give mine to Juliet.

" Have you said any thing to Mrs. Abington?

" Yours ever,

" E. TOP—."

" MRS. WELLS."

" My dear Pud,

" A THOUSAND thanks for your concern. I have heard from Bell:—he understands that all legal proceedings will drop if they could but know the author of Dr. Kentish's case. I have written to him, to tell them it is *Doctor Kentish himself*, who, having set his name to it, can have no wish or idea to shrink from it: lest the letter I have wrote to him by this post by any accident should not reach him, communicate this to him yourself, and *immediately*;—as the proceedings will go on, if not stopped, on Tuesday.

" I should have come up myself, but I can do no further good than this, and hope all will end properly; for the attempt of the college is very nonsensical, and I should laugh at it were it not at one's own expence.

" Some time since I sent you *original letters*—

an article: it contained one from a *Chinese Philosopher* to *Charles Fox*, and another from *Nobbi Wortz* at Oporto to the *Duke of Norfolk*; but I have seen nothing of them: perhaps they may be in *Millan's* hands.

“ Enclosed I send various articles which may appear as wanted: that of *Hinchinbrook* as soon as may be.

“ By the first time you write, let me know the *name* of the master of the stables which Mr. Este has been so kind as to take for me.

“ Pray give my best compliments to Este, and a thousand times thank him for all his attentions: as they are out of number, they are out of all return, but my remembrance of them, which will be perpetual, as well as to yours.

“ The verses of *Della Crusca* * are the most beautiful things I ever saw or read in my life. I would give all that I am worth to be the author of them.

* See Appendix [C].

" Did you read *my life*? tell me if you heard any thing about it.

" Yours, as long as life.

" If memory holds, still longer
" hereafter.

Wrote,

" E. ToP—."

" *Sunday, November 18th, 1787.*"

" MRS. WELLS."

My dear Pud,

" FROM not having heard any thing from you yesterday, I suppose the matter about Doctor Kentish has been settled.

" I think you should introduce Mr. Samuel to Mr. Bell, as he has not yet seen him, and it would be proper civility; before the meeting of parliament, too, it will be necessary.

" I have heard nothing likewise of that paper I gave you to shew Mr. Bell, about parliament.

"Tell Mr. Samuel to go on with Monsieur Calonne's book—the *Pièces Justificatives*—the Proofs in Justification.

"Yours ever,

"E. TOR—."

"MRS. WELLS."

"My best Pnd,

"I SEIZE a vacant moment in Sunday, to oblige *myself* in writing to you, with a thousand thanks for your good wishes, and a thousand prayers for your speedy recovery. But I see you are so proud of your boy, that there is no fear of you. As to the letter you enclosed, it is too contemptible for notice.

"You may send, however, for Smith, who may give this *verbal* answer, *not written*—
 'That when the accounts are settled, Mr. Este's bill shall be sent in, as well as the expences of

the law-suit in which he involved the paper ; and then whatever may be due to him for salary, if any such thing shall be due to him, shall be deducted.' As to any other notice, it is not worth thinking about. Let him bring his action whenever he pleases.

• “ If any application be made at the office, Mr. Swann or Mr. Fuller are to return for answer---that no accounts are ever shewn to strangers:---but that, when the expences of the law-suit in which Mr. Este involved the paper are ascertained, they shall be sent in to him with his bill, and if any thing is due to him for salary, it will be deducted.

“ Harriet is very well. Merry talks of coming to town on Saturday. Send for Mawhood, No. 12, Blenheim-street, Bond-street, and say I shall be very glad to see him on the Saturday, and that I requested you to tell him; so, instead of writing to him, as I thought it would save postage.

"Any thing that you may have to send he will bring.

"Tell Smith that the 4 volumes of Worlds, sent me bound from Dickie's, are the old ones that should have staid in London, but what I want is the continuation of the last year's; and that I hope the porter regularly lays by three blanks for me every morning. June 30th, 1788, is the last volume which I have here at present. I ought to have one whole year more. So let him see about it.

"I shall hope that I may perhaps be able to see you before you begin to play again.

"I should think *Henry* a good name for the young gentleman, if you have not thought of another.—Depend on it your health shall be drunk everywhere.

"As soon as you are able, give all the information and variety you can to the World.

"Yours ever and ever,

"*Cowslip-hall, September 4th.*" "E. T—."

"MRS. WELLS."

" My dear P—,

" *YOUR Old Kent* is more intelligible than your private writing, for you said something, I believe, about KEMBLE, and his wishing to speak to me, which I could not make out. You may say, should that be the case, that I shall be very glad to hear from him at any time.

" *YOUR OLD KENT* was good. Any private intelligence you can give at any time, do not neglect on any account; and theatricals, with apt quotations, under the signature of *Old Kent*, will always have good.

" Let Sir Francis Bourgois know you are in town, so that any thing may come safely that he may hear from abroad.

" How goes on all at the office?—Attentively and well?

" Be particular on this subject, and on the World.

"Walford much admires the picture of Cowslip, and talked of getting one. Now, as perhaps you could get an engraving for nothing

• • • • •

"Send a note with it as a present from you."

"I suppose Mr. Herriot will take care of the GRAND OPENING of the NEW DRURY."

"Harriet is just gone to church, and is well."

"Yours in haste,"

"Sunday, September 17." "E. T."

"MRS. WELLS."

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“ In regard to public business, you must see Merry, for he appears to me now to be doing nothing (though Smith can tell you), and if he does not, he then certainly means to do no more; in which case I must look out for a proper person.

“ At all events, this must be determined. If you send to him, at Osborne's hotel, Adelphi, a note that you wish to see him, naming the time, he will naturally wait on you.

“ You must likewise tell Smith we are very deficient in official intelligence; such as parliament being prorogued, which was at full in the Oracle, and indeed in every other paper: besides all business that might be learned at the offices—of arrivals of naval captains—what news they bring—what ministry are about; all which he might get by a blank to clerks at the offices, and which should be the leading paragraphs of a paper.

“ He is well enough known to get this, full as well as old Walsh.—This is very material, as

it is what the old dons call news. Scott, when in town, could give you a great deal of intelligence of this sort.

"The paragraph you mentioned was copied by me from the *Morning Post*.

"At every event see and resolve about Merry, for this can be trifled with no longer. Smith, however, can tell you whether or no he has done any thing lately.

"In the answer to Mr. Bell, which need not be given immediately, I am of opinion, with Mr. Hurlstone, that to the *WORLD* and *HERALD* it does not signify a sixpence whether there is such a paper as the *General Advertiser* or not. They can receive no benefit from its being abolished.

"Send likewise for Brydges, and tell him, that I found on my return home on Sunday a letter from him I did not well understand, but should I ever receive such another, I will, without one moment's delay, give instructions to proceed

legally against him for the note I have of his : that as to his publishing any accounts of mine, I don't care one farthing if they were published to all the world : that when Mr. Woodman and Mr. Smith have looked over his accounts and settled them, he shall pay or receive what may be his due : that his salary, as he knows, is a kindness of mine, and which shall only be paid on his good behaviour.

" After this letter of his, you may likewise say, I shall not chuse he should come to the office. This discretion you may give to Mr. Swann or Fuller, without assigning any reason. The enclosed is for Mr. Smith.

" Cowlip-hall,

" Yours ever,

Halsted, Essex.

" E. TOPHAM."

October 4th, 1790."

" P. S. You must tell Mr. Smith that I have arranged with Mr. Bourne about the national debates. I trust he has settled with Mr. Cooper."

" Mrs. WELLS."

" My dearest Pudd,

" I am this moment, after a long journey, wet and cold, arrived at York, where I find your letter. I thank you many times for your concern about my eye: which is now very well again, except a little weakness by candle-light. From being so near, the shot went into the bone, but I believe is now either sunk in or is tumbled out again. You need not be angry with Walford, for when he saw the blood running down my cheek, he was so sick, that he suffered more than I did. And so Heaven be praised it is no worse!

" In regard to M^{rs}. Blanch, if you will call at No. 10, in Welbeck-street, at Mr. Huntingford's, secretary to the Veterinary College, or send your compliments, and say you should be glad to speak to him from me—you can then say I much wish he would mention it as *my recommendation* at the next meeting of directors.

" Tell Mr. Huntingford I received his letter, and will write to Lord Oxford the first vacant moment I have on the subject he mentions.

" Think of the **WORLD**. Simon can be of use I see, and seems to have a knack of writing *fashionable fiddle-faddle*; in regard to which you may promise him, if he does well, he shall have the special privilege of mentioning himself.

" Let Mr. Heriott, if it come out shortly, write the account of **NOTORIETY**: and ask him if he received my last letter; in which I wrote to him fully on 2 or 3 subjects; and to which by this time I expected an answer.

" I have not yet seen Jack J——, but am going.

" My compliments to all who think of me: and send the before spoken a copy of the **Epilogues** I am to be the author of. Direct to the post-office.

" Tell Reynolds from me, I wish him

4 nights notoriously filled :

that he may be notoriously rich ;

and, as he is

notoriously clever, I expect

him to be

notoriously envied.

" Is Juliet as great a jack-pudding as ever ?

" York, Thursday evening,

" E. T."

October 27th, 1791."

[Several other letters from Mr. Topham to the authoress,
on miscellaneous topics, will be found in the Appendix
marked D.]

When Mr. Topham went down, in the shooting season, to his estate in Suffolk, it not only fell to my lot to report theatrical criticisms, but the more serious one of Mr. Hastings's trial; and so necessary did he conceive my exertions to the existence of *The World*, that he promised me a share in it, which, like our *Italian marriage*, he soon forgot. When I have been confined from my lying-in, he requested me (as has been shown), the first thing after leaving my room, to look after the affairs of *The World*, which I always punctually obeyed.

My readers will now suppose I was extremely happy. I was respected in my profession, and patronised in it by

the first personages in the realm * — the man to whom I had borne three lovely children making me believe that I was absolutely necessary to his existence, in my endeavours (notwithstanding my own avocations) to give every assistance to his paper.... But all humane hopes are vain! Poor weak and deluded woman, your feelings must be made of the hardest-tempered steel, or else you must be mad! — Trust not, my sex, to those scenes

“Where love is liberty, and nature law.”

The idea is certainly beautiful, but in the times for which it was written society must have been bound together

* See Appendix [E].

by a more delicate tie than it is at present.

Conceiving Beaufort-buildings too confined for the children, we removed to Weymouth-street, Portland-place, where I was delivered of my fourth child two months before my time, in consequence of a fright I received, occasioned by a duel being fought between two gentlemen on my account, from some expressions dropped respecting me. Mr. Reynolds, the dramatist, was one of the seconds. But Mr. Topham, having sold *his commission* in the Guards, had no license to 'sink, burn, and destroy : ' he looked upon the quarrel of the gentlemen with that *sagacity* which his time of life warranted.

Confined to my room for some time extremely ill, one day I overheard a conversation between my two servants. My housekeeper, who was very deaf, spoke louder than usual, not conceiving that I could hear her exclamations—an error into which deaf people often fall—and *that* conversation laid the groundwork of all the misery and persecution I have since undergone.

A lady, whom I ever conceived my bosom friend, and who was under the greatest obligations to me, called one morning to enquire after my health; but unfortunately for her, on her going out, she forgot to conceal a great prominence which she had lately acquired. The servants, in speaking of her, ex-

claimed several times: "*Wretch!—with child — by —.*" The fatal words reached my ear: to think that the man would behave so for whom I gave up every thing—peace of mind, *reputation!*—and for whom I refused one of the handsomest men, the most perfect gentleman, and the best bred man in England; and who never, during our intimacy, had to reproach me with the slightest infidelity! My state of health being so delicate, and the horrid expression worked so much upon me at the moment, that I was immediately seized with a milk fever. My feelings received such a shock, that, in the height of it, I must have mentioned the abominable fact, which never enters

my mind but I am agitated to a great degree.

As I was in possession of the transaction, there was no other way to avoid the scandal attached to it but by giving out to the world I was *mad*, and that any thing I said was not to be regarded, which was most industriously circulated abroad; and, to give the greater colouring to the business, I was some time after advised to take shelter under Dr. Willis, to avoid being arrested — *that the world might know I was under the care of a doctor who cured insanity.*

‘Oh tempora! oh mores! — it was but rehearsing that part of the drama which he had laid out for me to act; and it was forming plot and counterplot in the

most masterly manner, at the expense of the feelings of a poor, weak, injured woman, and the innocent offspring she brought into the world. I made a sacred promise, from that moment, we should be platonic lovers, and kept my word; thus is explained his afterwards allowing me to be dragged from prison to prison. The fatal secret was rankling in my unhappy bosom, and every effort I made to conceal it unstrung my nerves. Sooner than explain my case to the world, I chose to be unhappy; and the name of the lady will descend with me to the grave.

Mr. Topham's expressions concerning me, in the sketch of his life, written by himself, in the seventh volume of

Public Characters—(for, though the author's name is not mentioned, I recognise the *well-told tale* to be the production of his own pen)—has drawn this explanation from me, where he praises my beauty at the expense of my *sense*, and where he describes my madness in such *glowing* colours: but who is there would not be *mad* at any man's conduct who could act as he had done? If my behaviour afterwards in the King's-bench displeased him, why ever suffer me to go there, unless the *mad plot* would be imperfect without my *martyrdom*?—A fragment of a letter (all I can find of it) addressed to my mother on this diabolical attempt to bereave me of my senses follows.

"In regard to poor Mrs. Wells, she will of course be taken out on proper certification of her lunacy to the Lord Chancellor, which I am putting in a proper train. Of her madness there is not now a doubt; and she is better even where she is than in society, to alarm and distract everybody she sees.

"Miss Hamet, who got her away clandestinely from Dr. Willis's, meets with her due reward.

"In regard to yourself, rest assured your only consolation is now to think as little of this disastrous circumstance as possible."

The season at Drury-lane being over, I again engaged at the Haymarket, where I played Lady Randolph for the benefit of Mr. Jewel; and the

same season I played Isabella to a very crowded audience. My performance of these characters produced the following critiques in the daily papers.—

“It is with very singular satisfaction we observe Mrs. Wells announced for the Lady Randolph of Friday evening. This character affords as fine a test for a display of feeling and sensibility as is to be found in the copious catalogue of tragedy parts known to our modern stage. Strange as the assertion may on the first blush of it appear, the sterling merit of Mrs. Wells, as an actress, has operated as a check to the extension of her fame; in other words, if it had not been known that she was one of the most original and excellent comedians of the present day, so much doubt would not have been entertained of her powers in tragedy. But it was so natural to compliment Mrs. Wells with the supposition, that the in-

" comparable representative of Cowslip was ' to
 " the manner born,' and that it could not be that
 " she could arrest our attention and applause in
 " Isabella, we wonder not at the incredulity of
 " the town at first, and its unwillingness to credit
 " the round assertion we early hazarded, that
 " Mrs. Wells was equally gifted by nature with
 " faculties for tragedy, as she confessedly pos-
 " sessed abilities for comedy. Mr. Topham's
 " well-adapted address led the way to the detec-
 " tion of popular error; and experience, the
 " touchstone of truth, has supported our predic-
 " tion, and confirmed it completely. The Lady
 " Randolph of Mrs. Wells, we trust, will
 " strengthen the public conviction of her tragic
 " talents; and if, after that, the winter managers
 " do not advantage themselves of her various
 " qualifications, to stand eminently forward in
 " their groupe of performers of both kinds, they
 " will deserve to be marked as the dullest dunces

“ that ever blundered out of the beaten road, and
 “ mistook their functions.”—*Chronicle*.

“ On Friday night last, Mrs. Wells made her
 “ first appearance in Lady Randolph, for the
 “ benefit of Mr. Jewel, to a most crowded audi-
 “ ence; and considering that she undertook to
 “ study this most difficult task in eight days, it is
 “ almost impossible for persons who were not
 “ present to conceive the very finished style in
 “ which she performed the part. Her manner
 “ has more the air of Mrs. Crawford than of Mrs.
 “ Siddons; and her ‘ Was he alive!’ though not
 “ so affecting as the former, yet was far superior
 “ to the latter. The fainting situation had like
 “ to have proved a fatal one; for Mrs. Inchbald,
 “ attending to her own sweet person, perceiving
 “ her vacant eyes over the galleries, was totally
 “ inattentive and inanimate to what passed on
 “ the stage; and therefore, when Mrs. Wells

"fell back, but not Bembry ran to her assist-
 "ance, and caught her arm just in the moment,
 "her head must have come with full force to the
 "ground, and her skull in all probability been
 "fractured. The audience saw the accident, and
 "both men and women shrieked out. We can
 "not omit here informing the public, that when
 "a lady behind the stenge afterwards remarked
 "the circumstance to Mrs. Inchbald, and said it
 "was near proving fatal, that actress, with great
 "apathy, replied, 'Then we should have had the
 "tragedy realised.' Mrs. Wells was in strong
 "hysterics with the fright for near half an hour."
 —*Chronicle.*

"Mrs. Wells performed the part of Lady
 "Randolph, and in this difficult character made
 "a new appeal to the feelings and judgment of
 "the town on her claims to the bowl and dag-
 "ger. Her pathos was tender and energetic.

" On more than one occasion she drew from the
 " bosoms of the audience emotions of sympathy
 " and interest, the most legitimate testimonies to
 " her power; and we believe that there are few
 " who departed unconvinced of the justice of
 " her pretensions to a respectable department in
 " tragedy."—*Theatrical Register*.

The Haymarket theatre closing for
 the season, I entered into an engage-
 ment with the managers of Covent
 Garden to play the first tragic parts, the
 leading ones of which I went through in
 succession. I made my *entré* in *Island
 Shore*, with the farce of *The Fool*, the
 ideas of which I suggested to Mr. Top-
 ham, who kindly put them into a form

to meet the public eye :—it is a part I have ever been reckoned to perform well, and is the only one I can play now, as the able assistance given me in it by the above gentleman has left an indelible impression on my memory*.

At the close of the season I received letters from Mr. Hughes at Weymouth, and Mr. Watson at Cheltenham, offering me the same terms they gave to Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Jordan for six nights at each theatre†. How different I found things at Cheltenham since my first appearance as Juliet (when Miss Davies) in the barn, where the dressing-rooms were divided from each other by

* See Appendix [E].

† See Appendix [F].

that useful article called a blanket, in some parts of which the holes were but imperfectly stitched up, to hide what nobody ought to see—a lady in her *dishabille*. I found an elegant theatre; and had the honour of being commanded by their Majesties to play Cowslip, and Julia in *The Midnight Hour*, on the first night of my arrival.

The name of Cheltenham never comes into my mind but I think of a barn, which laid the foundation of that profession which afterwards enabled me to support my family. Name but that friendly barn to some of my contemporaries, and you instantly give to their frame a convulsive shock far more severe than could be given by Dr. Gal-

vani with all his apparatus—as if the tawdry tinsel of a mimic queen could hide the meanness of their origin !

Could we have but one slight perspective of our future life, what numerous misfortunes we might avoid!—

“ But Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate.” An event took place after this, in which nearly all the misfortunes of my latter years originated ; but, as I have long since learned to philosophise, I perfectly agree with Pope,

“ Whatever is, is right.”

— A Mr. ——— paid his addresses to my sister, and as I conceived him to be a man of respectable connections and good education (which last qualification

he certainly possessed), I gave my consent; but, to my great mortification, they had not been a week married before I discovered he was an apostate Jew, overwhelmed with debt, and supporting himself merely by writing a few paragraphs for the Morning Post at a salary of one guinea per week. In this manner is many a female led away by the specious appearances of a pedantic *petit-maitre*, who often conceals under his splendid apparel the basest heart. I may justly compare him to an Indian temple, beautiful without, but found, upon inspection, to be only the splendid habitation of some despicable insect. As the die was cast, I had only to make the best of it. I prevailed on

the proprietor of the paper called *The World* to give him the more lucrative situation of a reporter, and who doubled his salary : but he did not retain that situation long, for he was thrown into the Fleet-prison by his creditors, where I shall leave him till I bring his discharge.

As his father performs a part in these tragic scenes, I cannot omit the desire I have of letting the world know the connections my sister entangled me with. Her husband's father got a livelihood, as a collector of old coins, in the city of Lincoln ; and, as a member of the congregation of Israelites, I believe was as industrious and honest as it was possible for him to be : one thing I certainly can vouch for—he was not

able to pay off the national debt. Colonel Glover, a gentleman of respectability in the county, took notice of his son, and placed him on the foundation of the Charter-house, whence his father sent him to college; and thus was the corporation of some respectable trade deprived of an able journeyman, or the tribe of old-clothesmen of one of its members. At the same time, the nation being engaged in war, all the old coins were melted into cannon, the old Jew was ruined, and Mr. S., as I before observed, wrote for a paper.

My sister's *accouchement* drawing near, I was not only burthened with supporting her husband in prison, but likewise with furnishing for her a small

house, the rent of which I also paid, and sent her every necessary and comfort requisite on such an occasion. From the daily and endless expenses I incurred on account of my sister and her husband, I was advised to pay his debts, and send him abroad. Not having any money by me, I was obliged to raise it on the most disadvantageous terms, and sign warrants of attorney to pay the remainder by instalments: thus was I binding myself with fetters, which I was never to loosen.....Here let me drop a tear at the shrine of Friendship; and, Mr. S., if one blush yet remain within you, let it come forth: could I but see it, I might still hope you were not lost to every fine and honourable feeling. Recollect, to emancipate you from the

walls of a prison, I drew down destruction on the sincerest and best of women.....I took the advice of my friends to send my brother-in-law abroad. I made interest to get him a situation in India, through Major Scott, the gentleman who interested himself on Mr. Hastings's trial; but, from the imperfect state of his medical education, it was necessary he should remain in London some time, as he chose the profession of a surgeon, to go through the necessary routine. The people who advanced me the money to pay his expenses at the hospitals, his and his wife's maintenance, and, subsequently, his passage out, required some person to join me in security*. I

* See Appendix [G].

requested a lady of small fortune, a friend of mine, to do it : she accordingly consented ; but, from my never being able to pay the full demands, and he neglecting to transmit anything towards it from India, although he had faithfully promised to do so, her property was seized and sold ; and she lived for a length of time in poverty and obscurity, always sharing my fate while I had a *fate* to share. At last, a respectable family in the west of England, knowing her worth, virtuous conduct, and good education, took her under their roof as governess to their children, where she still remains, respected by all who know her worth, and capability of the charge she has undertaken.

The time of his probation having expired, he was admitted as a surgeon. I then took a passage for him and his wife, for which I paid two hundred and forty pounds: I likewise furnished them with every comfort necessary for so long a voyage, and a good wardrobe to wear in the country*. I even provided them with luxuries as well as necessaries; for knowing Mr. S. was extremely fond of having his hair powdered. . . . Powder did I say! I never hear that name mentioned but I long to apologise to the Cherokee nation for the inconvenience I caused their chiefs during their residence in this country. As I never had an opportunity of doing it before,

* See Appendix [H].

I hope the old adage, "Better late than never," will be a sufficient apology.— We were on our way to Gravesend, where they were to take shipping. A post-chaise, with some friends in it, followed my chariot, on the front of which was a large box of powder for Mr. S.'s use. Driving by the Cherokees, who happened to be taking an airing in their carriage, it unfortunately burst; and the wind, being in that direction, blew the greater part of the contents in at their windows. As that nation ever conceives the most trifling effects to spring from preternatural causes, and as I heard them mutter some words in a strange dialect—not with the elegance of the Italian cadence—I imagine they

implicated curses on the author of their misfortune, which, I fear, took effect, as I was arrested afterwards in Ireland for that very powder :—how happy I feel since it has gone out of fashion, as I have not occasion to mention the word to any one but Mr. S.!

They departed, leaving under my protection their only child, which, from its birth, I had ever treated with maternal care: they expressed the greatest professions of gratitude for my kindness to them; I begged of Mr. S. not to think for a moment of what I had done for him; but remember well my saying to him, ‘ If I should ever come to want, I hope you will do as much for me.’ If he should read these lines, which I

have not the most distant doubt but he will—I defy him to abstain from it—he will perceive the very letters blush for him, for letting that woman want whom he so faithfully promised to protect, and which, had he done, would only be returning her her own.

I still kept up my engagement at Covent-garden theatre with success, but not with the same composure of mind as before. The securities I had entered into for Mr. S. constantly affected my spirits, and frequently threw me into such agitation as almost to deprive me of my senses; and what preyed most upon them was, the idea of his ingratitude, which no doubt he will deny: but, courteous reader, recollect it is a crime

of so base a nature, that the man was never yet known who confessed himself guilty of it! — On his leaving England, he assured me most faithfully that he would remit the money to settle his debts, and that, too, by the Swallow packet, as she was reckoned the fastest ship. But, alas! I found her the dullest sailer that ever crossed the Atlantic; for, to this day, she has never brought me a release from misery.....I hope I shall be excused entering into particulars about Mr. S.; but he is, in reality, the remote cause whence many of the actions of my after-life took their origin, and which kept me so long buried in the gloomy winter's cloud in which I was embosomed. Every spring that

rolls over my head is embittered by the appearance of swallows, as it puts me in mind of the fatal packet. Even the person at the India-house, to whom I used to send to know if the Swallow had arrived, either felt so much for my unfortunate situation, or my teasing him so often with messages, that he at last execrated the name of swallow as much as I did.

All this time I continued my engagements at Corent-garden, and had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from Mr. Harris, acknowledging my exertions, with a promise of having my salary raised each season *; and for which, though at this distance of time, I thank

* See Appendix [I].

him, as well as for his gentleman-like and consistent deportment towards me; which I believe has been uniform to every performer that has come within my knowledge.—Not being able to shew to those creditors with whom I involved myself on Mr. S.'s account an extract from the log-book of the Swallow, that he had shipped either specie or bills of exchange to answer their demands, they became clamorous, which made me perform under the most distressed state of mind—my articles being renewed with Mr. Harris. Being informed that several writs were issued against me, I was compelled to resort to several stratagems to avoid being arrested—such as taking lodgings—send-

ing the servant in the carriage to the theatre, and slipping in myself by a private door;—a detail of all which would rather tire than please, as such things are so well known to the different ranks of life of the present age.

The fatal moment at length arrived in which I was to pass the fiery ordeal: it was written in the book of Fate, in large letters, that I was to be UNFORTUNATE, and I am sorry to say those letters have never been erased.—On the evening on which their Majesties commanded the play of The Recruiting Officer, I was preparing to go to the theatre, when my servant announced a person enquiring for me. The stranger perceiving that he was a Frenchman,

and fearing, I suppose, he might not deliver the message properly, followed him closely up stairs, burst into the room, and announced himself as—Mr. John Doe; immediately after enters Mr. Richard Roe, his friend. Never was a criminal, about to receive his final doom from the mouth of justice, more terrified than I was at the dreadful names. I wished Mr. John Doe at the north—and, that the globe might be balanced, Mr. Richard Roe at the south—pole, out of my presence. Soon after came in their followers, to the number of thirteen—a tolerable *posse committatus* to arrest one woman, and which I firmly believe the annals of all those temples of imposition in London, called

lock-up houses, cannot exceed. The name of such places, once so terrible to the poor and the distressed, has put a thought into my head, and I cannot for a moment resist the impulse I feel to give my opinion. My friends well know that, when once I wish to give it, out it must come: let them deny it if they can; and, for the truth of the assertion, I appeal to John Kemble....

Lord Redesdale and Earl Moira, on my knees I apologise to you for putting your names in the same page with his: comparisons are at all times odious; but the one I am going to make I fear exceeds the superlative degree. — Government is the same word, whether in a theatre or a kingdom; and my premis-

ing a theatre is a little kingdom in itself; in which the manager can govern with despotic sway, if the baseness of his heart leads him to do it, I hope will plead in my behalf....

In the kingdom of Covent Garden he rules the distressed man of genius with a rod of iron; the pedantry, illiberality, and bigotry, of the order to which he belonged; at St. Omer, sways his narrow mind; the gratification of his pocket, not of the public, is his leading characteristic:—he has never had to accuse his heart of having sheltered from want “the houseless child of woe;” nor, indeed, through his whole life, is one generous action laid to his door. As to the humble performers

—many of whom, though poor (the greatest crime they can be guilty of in his eyes), might one day rise in their profession, but for his arrogance in trampling down their dawning merit—the fear of losing their hard-earned pittance obliges them to put up with whatever he chooses to impose upon them; and thus does he treat a liberal public! Liberal they have been, indeed, to him; and with what gratitude he repays it!—Dares to monopolise every circumstance concerning the theatre, without once consulting their feelings or opinions: but they have lately shewn him that, however they appreciate his merit, and pay him liberally for his labours, they will not suffer them-

selves to be treated ill with impunity! Thank God, a Sheridan still lives! and we yet hope to see old Drury rear its lofty walls. In the kingdom of Great Britain how the scene is reversed!

My Lord Redesdale, I wish you knew as well as I do the blessings that are poured upon your head by all ranks of society:—the great praise your philanthropy;—the poor teach their children to mention you in their prayers;—the methodist says you have charity;—the Irishman declares all the rest of your life he will like you, for he now believes you are a good fellow: but he swears, it was Lord Moira who took you into partnership in the business;

for, he justly observes, that worthy* nobleman has been all his life struggling

* In speaking of Lord Moira, it was suggested to me by several friends that the word 'worthy' was not so proper in this place as *illustrious* would be; but conceiving that no word of mine could make his lordship more so than he is, I spoke to my printers on so serious a subject—for any thing that concerns Lord Moira must be of serious moment to society—and their observations suggested to me the following ideas:—that it was impossible any thing I should commit to paper could add to the character of a nobleman sprung from one of the greatest families in England, he being the lineal descendant of Lord Hastings, who was beheaded by the Duke of Gloster in the Tower;—of a nobleman whose highest gratification it has been, all his life, to descend from his exalted

in the cause of humanity. This I believe. His name is inscribed on the walls of every dungeon in the empire, which neither all their loathsome damp nor all-destroying time can efface; as the ink with which it was written is preserved in bosoms of gratitude, and each succeeding victim, as he views, touches it afresh, and thus it will be station, to visit the unhappy prisoner, and endeavour to alleviate his sufferings;—of a nobleman whose conduct as a brave soldier and able general will be remembered as long as the records of the American war remain; and had those great abilities which he displayed at the beginning of the war in his march through France (the gallant 83th, then a young regiment, under General Doyle, forming a part of his brigade) been brought into action, we should not now have to blush for the convention of Cintra, or to feel for the miseries of *Walcheren*.

handed down to posterity. My lord, I am a woman acquainted with misfortune, and sometimes go to the abode of Misery, with a heart thankful for the humanity shewn to myself while one of its inhabitants, to offer either my little mite or whatever assistance my humble efforts can afford the unhappy prisoner. On my entrance, I no longer see the sallow countenance, haggard with despair;—a lively hope seems to reanimate the emaciated prisoners, from your lordship's never-to-be-too-much-praised efforts in their behalf. The tradesman, whom misfortune has brought to distress, hopes, before death finishes his earthly career in a prison, to rear his little family—his only comfort on this side the grave;—the man

of genius (for there are many in prisons) hopes again to be a benefit to society ;—the sailors and soldiers hope to pluck one more laurel from the Gallic brow. But, before I bid you adieu, my lord, I must offer you my blessing ; and, if the prayers of the unhappy and unfortunate have any weight at the throne of mercy, be assured of mine.

I was escorted to a lock-up house, whence I sent immediately for Mr. Reynolds the author, and requested him to go to the office of The World newspaper, the property of Mr. Topham (who happened to be out of town), and procure the money, which was instantly paid ;—the only pecuniary obligation

I was ever under to that gentleman in any life, and which I afterwards repaid him by instalments, as his letter to Mr. Reynolds, dated 30th of March, 1792, hereafter given, will prove. I mention this to shew to my children, that to the exertions of their mother alone are they indebted for their infant nurture, education, and that introduction into life which afterwards enabled them to become the wives of gentlemen of respectability, who, I am sorry to find, are at present affected, and have been for some time past, with that most unfeeling of all diseases, a petrification of the heart.

I was no sooner at liberty than my friends advised me to set out for France

that very night, till some arrangement could be made with the rest of my creditors, to which I acceded. But I had three lovely children; and I was doomed to leave them behind!—Oh, my full heart!—Their infant years rendered them unfit for such a journey; and this was the first moment they were separated from me;—even their education was received in the house. Reader, hast thou ever had children, whom your fond and partial eye formed with every grace? you will then be able to judge what my feelings must be on such an occasion—

“ He best can paint them who can feel them most.”

Accompanied by Mr. Reynolds, I

set out immediately for Dover, where we arrived without any thing of consequence occurring, got on board one of the packets (but her name was not the *Swallow*), and arrived in Calais in a few hours.

This gentleman was the intimate friend of Mr. Topham, who requested him to conduct me, and had ever been upon the strictest terms of friendship with us both—as his letters to me will shew, several of which I lay before the public *: but at the time those professions were made I was in prosperity. His conduct towards me since I have been immersed in misfortune convinces me that none of them were sincere.

* See subsequent pages, and Appendix [K].

But he ought to recollect, that he owes entirely to me the bringing out his play of *THE DRAMATIST*, when it had been rejected at both houses. I persisted in getting it up for my own benefit, contrary to the express wish and advice of Mr. Harris: the *success* of the play is known to every one, which I foresaw, Thus, by my perseverance and friendship, was Reynolds *the Dramatist* rescued from the oblivion in which he must ever deservedly have remained, as the simple, insignificant Reynolds.

At my departure from England, I left considerable property in the hands of Mr. Topham, to dispose of and first pay himself--as he never allowed me to be in arrears with him; and whatever ba-

lance might be due, I would pay to him by instalments out of my winter and summer salaries. The arrangement he made on that occasion will appear by a following letter; for he very *wisely* observed, as *all* my creditors had not come into terms, and he was the principal one *, he might as well be settled with. He had a very particular manner of adjusting all the money affairs between himself and me: for of my benefit at Covent-garden, which produced two hundred and fifty pounds clear †, I find, by Mr. Reynolds's letter, eighty pounds was paid to Mr. Johnstone of that theatre (who in the most handsome manner lent

* The sum due to him was 70 or 80*l*.

† See Mr. Reynolds's letter, p. 139.

it me at a time I stood in need of it); but for the remainder, God and Mr. Topham only know about it, for I have heard no more of it to this day. The many instalments which were paid by Mr. T. into the hands of Mr. Barnard, silversmith, in the Strand, and which he drew out (the dates and sums of which I still have by me), were too insignificant for him to account for, or of *too much consequence* to inform a *mad* woman.

We reached Calais at that unlucky moment when the French nation was on the eve of a revolution, which has since deluged Europe with blood. The morning after my arrival I went to the convent of the order of Benedictines, and agreed with the lady-

abbess to become an inmate: I paid the necessary advance, sent in my trunks, and was to commence next morning. In the interim, an order came from the National Assembly to destroy the building, and turn upon the world all those emblems of frozen chastity. With great difficulty I got back my trunks; and was obliged to submit to the loss of the money I had paid, extremely happy in having escaped so well, and not at all disappointed in having eluded a visit from the Sans Culottes.

I never witnessed a more distressing scene in my life than the unfortunate sisterhood exhibited in the streets;—I felt, from the bottom of my heart,

for their situation. The lady-abbess had held her office for upwards of sixty years, and had grown grey in the service of God ! Her unfortunate companions felt more for her than for themselves, and supplicated the unfeeling soldiery to have compassion on her. Whether their former conduct, or the policy of the times, demanded such sacrifices, was not the consideration at the moment ; pity for their distress, and a sympathy for their sufferings, took possession of me. I looked towards the white cliffs of Dover, and silently put up a prayer, that the Almighty would avert such calamities from my native land, blessed the constitution under which I was born, and

wished myself back, not caring what I might undergo, so it were in Britain! —I should have said the sacred land of Britain! for there a man's house is his castle, if but inclosed with a cobweb, which can neither be broken through by the fiat of a king, nor the caprice of his ministers. I remained in Calais about two months, when the joyful tidings arrived that my affairs in England were patched up for the present, and that I was once more enabled to return. I lost no more time in obeying the summons than was necessary to pack up my trunks. I crossed the water, and had the inexpressible delight of once more embracing my beloved children.

The following letter from Mr. Topham to Mr. Reynolds, at Calais, will shew the terms on which I was permitted to return, unmolested at the time, to my professional avocations in my native country.—

“ My dear friend,

“ MR. Carpentier is the bearer of this, and what it encloses. I have this day ordered the enclosed advertisement to the papers.

“ He will pay you 15*l.* for me: if you should want 5*l.* more, I have no doubt he will advance it. I have not yet been able to dispose of any thing for Mrs. Wells: but no matter.

“ I really think her affairs have the prospect of being settled very speedily; but pecuniary arrangements are not possible in a minute. Perhaps three weeks, or much less, may do for the whole.

"I have, in answer to Leary's letter, proposed that Mrs. Wells shall pay from

Her winter engagements . . 4*l.* each week ;

From her summer (if any) . 3*l.* ditto ;

A quarter of each of her benefits, perhaps half : till the whole debt due was discharged. And the above sums deducted to be placed in the hands of a reputable and proper banker, for security.

"Now you know nearly as much as I do about all circumstances ; and you can as well determine as I, whether it would be better for Mrs. Wells to stay a week or two longer at Calais, or remove to St. Omer to Mr. Carpentier's sister, and you return to England. If it be only for a short time, the expence perhaps of removing would be to the full as great as staying. All this, however, must rest with yourself. If you stay, send me word what you think would be best as an opera, with Mrs. Billington, for me to take ; or whether **THE DRA-**

MATIST (with the puff on the name), and Mrs. Billington in the farce; or, in short, *what* would be best. God bless you!

"Carpentier will be able to give you all necessary information.

"Adieu! adieu! for I have 6 people waiting to speak to me.

"Yours ever,

"*Sunday morning,
March 30th, —92.*"

"E. T."

On my return to England I renewed my engagement at Covent-garden, and had the heartfelt satisfaction of being most graciously received by a crowded audience. I continued playing the entire season, appropriating half my salary every week towards satisfying my creditors: at the close of which I engaged to go Weymouth, to

perform six nights ; where a circumstance occurred, from which every effort was made to prejudice a great personage against me. A certain nobleman, whose name will be remembered while politeness is fashionable in England, on going on board the Southampton man-of-war, jumped so nimbly over a rope, that his dexterity was applauded, and he was ordered to repeat it by ——. I did not mean to say it was his intention to exhibit himself, but my unhappy tongue, which is sometimes afflicted with an involuntary motion, said, without meaning any offense, that he was engaged for the season at Sadler's Wells, and was only rehearsing his part. Who would sup-

pose so great a nobleman possessed of such a little mind as to make a party against me? But so it was; and the next winter I was to be hissed in Covent-garden! The season at length arrived, and the theatre opened with the play of the Clandestine Marriage: their Majesties honoured it with their presence the first night. I came forward in the part of Betty: three or four began to hiss;—I remained a few seconds without speaking a word; when the court began to applaud, the scene was soon reversed, and my enemies disappointed. Next morning the prints of the day mentioned the business; and some of them went so far as to assert, that their Majesties would not have seen

me in the part of Betty, but that there was no other person studied in the part. A sufficient refutation of such calumnies is, that their Majesties commanded the play of the Belle Stratagem the next week (in which I performed Lady Frances Touchwood), with the farce of the Midnight Hour (in which I played Julia). I continued performing different parts till the month of April, when the creditors again began to be troublesome; and, accompanied by a female friend, I was a second time hurried to France, whence I was soon obliged to fly, to avoid the persecutions of Robespierre.

On my arrival in London I sent to Mr. Topham, to inform him I was come,

when he requested Mr. Reynolds to leave me at an hotel for that night. At our interview next morning, the alarm of creditors was again thundered in my ears, and I was persuaded by him to leave London under that impression, when in fact it was for the express purpose of having me out of his way, as he had lately taken into the house a Mrs. Lambert, and he did not wish me to be acquainted with the circumstance.

Thus behold him sacrificing every tender tie for his own gratification ! But this is not a solitary instance, I am sorry to say, of such conduct. The fate of the unfortunate woman was melancholy : she did not retain her power over the affections of the *sultan* long ; for she was discarded very soon after, to

make way for some more fortunate fair to whom the *handkerchief was thrown*; and, by depending on his honour, lost an annuity of two hundred pounds a-year, which would have enabled her to live independent, *even in Mr. Topham's house.*

As the continent was now shut against me, he was at a loss, or at least seemed to be; when the mad scheme was for the first time developed, and he advised me to go down to Gretford, near Stamford, in Lincolnshire, to be near Dr. Willis. Lodgings were taken for me at a farm-house in the neighbourhood, where I went under the name of *Wilson*. I kept up a correspondence with all my friends, but particularly with Mr. Topham, and Mr.

Reynolds, who *then* favoured me with his friendship, several of whose letters follow.—

“ My dear, dear friend,

“ I HAVE received all your letters; and received them with so much pleasure, that I know nothing in life that can come within half the heart-felt satisfaction.—Go on; keep as you are: and though I am this moment in the midst of all the favour that London and its flattering scenes can afford, I can be proud to tell you, that I sigh—that I pant to sit down for ever in the very farm-house you now reside in. Do pray write to me again: don't be a niggard in your correspondence; if you are, I shall be very—very angry with you.

“ Your benefit was a free one, 250*l.*; and Johnstone has already been paid. This I know will gratify you, because he was a fair creditor.

" Pray—pray give me another letter; and tell me how I can add to your present happiness.

" About the newspapers — do you receive them?

" May 17th.

" F. R."

" Mrs. WILSON."

" My dear friend,

" I HAVE received both your letters—your kind and *proper* letters. I would have answered them sooner, but I have been at Thaydon with Topham, visiting your mother, who longs to hear from you. To Miss Harriet you must also send a line: she sends to my chambers every day.—In regard to coming down, you have entirely mistaken me: it was Topham that promised to pay you a visit in the course of a month, not me, upon my honour; and I believe he is detained in town at present

by various avocations : and he talks of going to see the children in Suffolk before he visits you. However, I know he means to keep his word.

“ I long to see you, I assure ; but while you remain *low*, it is better you should not be disturbed by any of us. The great object is your health ; and if you continue as you are, I will change the scene for you, by taking you a little journey. But this must be some time hence, for fear of altering your system. Pray let me know, as often as you can, how your health is ; for to have you low in the month of June is so gratifying, that your old winter friend may at last become your summer companion. If you knew how highly I thought of your conduct !....

“ My best compliments to the doctor.

“ Adieu ! Ever, ever yours,

“ *May 30th.*”

“ F. R.”

“ Mrs. WILSON.”

" My dearest friend,

" **THERE** are two letters for you at Paddington, written by Topham ; but owing to the difficulty of getting franks, they can't be sent. Pray ask the doctor if all letters may n't be directed, under cover, to the farmer where you are ?

" The box is so full I cannot send all I promised. If you think proper, give ' How to grow Rich ' to the doctor.—Miss H. is safe.

" The king goes to the play on Monday, which is rather against Tuesday. However, all *must* be right, where there is such superior goodness.

" F. R."

" Mrs. WILSON."

" My dear friend,

" **YOUR** letter has indeed made me happy ; and the more I reflect on

your conduct, the more I admire and respect you. When your late behaviour can be made public, all your former follies will vanish, and every body will think of you as I do. Pray persevere, and continue to shew your good sense by shewing yourself so happy and contented. I thank you for laughing at me; and my only apology for not writing is, having been all day long at cricket, getting health and spirits to exhaust in your company. T— is gone into Suffolk, and brings up the children for the holidays. Pray write to him as often as you can, for your letters please him much: indeed, I must say you are considerably improved in your style;—no little short scraps of papers, with words scored under, now—but letters that, without any compliment, come “warm from the heart and faithful to its fires.”—You are really a delightful correspondent; and never so pleasant as when you are jocular. Do laugh at me again in your next, and let it be speedily. You

see I must conclude, on account of Miss H—. For Heaven's sake don't give a hint where you are, but say you are 350 miles from town !

“ F. R.”

“ Mr. BELLOWS.”

“ July 2d.

“ My dear friend,

“ I MAY now scold you for not writing. I enclosed you a letter from Miss H. ten days ago, and directed it to Mr. B—, as you desired. Pray let me know if you continue quite well ; and once more truly describe your state of health ;—if you have had the least relapse, or any part of your disorder.

“ I can now inform you, that, in the course of five or six weeks, you may depend on seeing me ; and, if you are well, I will promise to take

you a journey for a month at least. This, I think, will be a change of scene for you, and absolutely necessary for your health.

“ What a summer has this been to any previous one! You will now be calm all the winter; and I think—” [*The remainder of this letter has been destroyed by the mice, my cupboard affording them no better food.*]

“ MRS. WILSON.”

“ My dear friend,

“ I SHALL be with you (please God!) by about ten o'clock on Sunday se'n night, 11th instant; and I hope you will have every thing ready to go away directly. T— is on his journey: I think you will see him on Monday; and pray write me word if you will be ready to go on the 11th. I hope it will suit, as I have arranged every thing for the journey. I shall bring down your clothes.

"The post is just going out. So excuse,
and believe me ever sincerely yours,

" F. R.

" Pray write a line or two to Miss H— : it
will keep her quiet a long time. Enclose it
to me.

" *August 2d.*"

" Mr. BELLows."

Other letters are still in my possession, and I will retain them to the last moment of my life, to convince the world I was not mad, as was endeavoured to be proved ; or, allowing that I even was, I must have communicated the infection to my correspondents, for taking the trouble to write such letters to a madwoman : but the trifling sum

I owed was to be paid, and I had it not. Had any generous friend stepped forward at that moment and assisted me, my children would not now be ashamed to acknowledge their mother, many a day of sorrow would have been avoided, and I should not now be a burthen to the theatrical fund—the gentlemen managing which have behaved with the greatest benevolence to me, and have done every thing in their power to alleviate my situation.

Mr. Topham requested Mr. Reynolds to go down to my retreat, and attend me to a watering-place, for the benefit of my health, which he was kind enough to do, and took me to a village near Lynn in Norfolk, where I

remained a month. Thence I went to Thaydon-lodge, in Essex, where my mother then resided with my children; and I hope I shall not be thought premature in explaining in this place the reason for her removal there.

Mr. Topham has been *acting* all his life in the great theatre of the world: his plots have been well laid, and tolerably well performed: but there is always a something in the stratagems of ~~his~~ narrow mind, which every one sees through but the person himself; and as *my family* have ever formed part of his *dramatis personæ*, I must explain to the world why my aged mother (now nearly eighty, and who is supported by the liberality and goodness of my sister) is

without a bed she can call her own to lay her aged head on.—She lived at Merton, whence Mr. Topham enticed her to go to Thaydon, and, during my absence, to superintend the education of the children. In such conduct he had two motives: the cottage at Merton was elegantly furnished; that furniture *would answer at Thaydon* (for he always had a keen eye towards economy): if he had that, he need not purchase new. He succeeded, and it was removed accordingly.

Some time after my mother took up her residence at Thaydon, she received a letter from Mr. Topham, informing her he had prevailed on his niece, Miss Walton, who had just arrived from a

convent in France, to assist her in the education of her grandchildren; and that she might expect her down shortly. My mother was extremely happy at the idea of receiving one of the highly-respected family of the Waltons of Lancashire as an inmate, and the daughter of his own sister.

Her arrival at Thaydon, as the *artless* tale was afterwards told me by my daughters, was rather singular for the niece of Mr. Topham. The children counted the moments till the arrival of their dear cousin. A chaise at length drove to the door, and Miss Walton was announced. Hearing she was lately from France, they expected to see a large trunk filled with toys and presents,

and with the most anxious solicitude looked all round for it; but, to their astonishment, a small paper band-box was handed out, which was immediately sent up to the dressing-room; and their curiosity led them up stairs privately to have a peep at its contents, which consisted of an old dirty pair of stays, a *veteran chemise*, and two pair of stockings which evidently displayed the thorough knowledge she possessed of the *elegant art of darning*. The lady being accustomed to a fire in *HER dressing-room* (although it was the height of summer), one was instantly got ready, and she nearly suffocated every person in the house by committing those filthy relics to eternal obli-

vion. Two days after, a large box came down from London filled with dresses of every description not made up, a riding-habit excepted.—The sum which they cost might have saved me many a heart-rending sigh, and many an exiled moment from my children and my country.

As soon as her clothes were made, so as to enable her to move in the respectable circle which was intended for her in the neighbourhood of the Wolds' cottage, she was sent thither with her *cousin* Maria, my third daughter. My mother remained at Thaydon for near a year after, where she expected to end her days; but Mr. Topham, finding that he could not get his *protégée* introduced

into society, and conceiving that my mother coming down to matronise her would have a good effect, prevailed on her to come and bring her furniture with her—which remains there to this day, although it ought to be the comfort of an aged woman bending under the weight of those afflictions which his vile conduct heaped upon her.

But the finale of the piece turned out contrary to Mr. Topham's expectations. Miss Walton was recognised, by the servant of a neighbouring gentleman, to be Betty Turnbull, sister to a hair-dresser of that name, and a member of a Cyprian convent in St. George's Fields. But she managed her matters so badly, or cared so little for the opi-

nion of the world, that she was discovered by the family to share not only Mr. T.'s affections, but his bed.—If she were really Betty Turnbull, what a despicable man must he be to pay his family and the gentry around the Wolds so poor a compliment as in one instance to suffer her to assume a name that with him should have been sacred, and for which he ought to have staked not only his property, but his life; and, on the other, to have dared to presume to impose so base a woman upon such respectable people as reside in the neighbourhood of that cottage. Were she really his niece, his name will be registered in the temple of Infamy, the records of which are kept by Satan, who, when

he transmits such deeds to his archives, will exclaim, with enthusiasm — *Our worthy disciple's name* shall be inscribed in letters of adamant, as a lasting monument of our esteem!

The reader, I hope, will pardon this long though necessary digression. I now continue my narrative.—After remaining at Thaydon about a week, I resolved to return to Gretford with my three children, and present them to Dr. and Mrs. Willis (for they had often expressed a wish to see them), as a mark of my gratitude for their politeness to me whilst in the country. On my arrival at the doctor's, I found he had set out for London; when Mrs. Willis, who conceived that a person once made must

always remain so — knowing that a short time before I had been under the doctor's hands, and supposing it had been for that complaint—was alarmed at my appearance, and instantly sent for Dr. John Willis, who then officiated for his father. On his entering the room where I was, with his hat on and a keeper with him carrying a strait-waistcoat, I immediately perceived he took it for granted that I was actually mad, and was determined to treat me accordingly. My temper, which was never one of the most placid, was at such treatment worked up to a pitch of frenzy ; upon which he ordered a pair of blisters to be put to my legs, which orders were immediately executed. I remained in

this situation an entire week, when my children's governess came down, and, being persuaded also that I was mad, took them away from me. Previously to their departure, I wrote a note to my sincere friend Mrs. Hemit, concealed it in a little box, and gave it to my eldest daughter, then only eight years of age (now married to the Rev. Dr. Ford, of Yorkshire), with instructions to deliver it with her own hand on her arrival in London, which she accordingly did. Mrs. Hemit immediately set off to my relief, waited on Dr. Willis, shewed him my letter, and asked him if I was really mad. "No, madam," said he, "not she indeed, I now perceive; but she is the most vio-

lent outrageous woman I ever saw."—

"Then, sir," replied my friend, "I may take her away?"—"Most assuredly, madam," he immediately answered.

But all her entreaties, however, could not prevail on him to let us have some mode of conveyance as far as Stamford; and in this situation of affairs I was doomed to walk four miles, with my legs raw from the blisters, on a scorching hot day. On our arrival at the inn, my friend asked for some rags to dress my blisters; from our appearance, and such a request, the people conceived that we had escaped from a mad-house, and dispatched a messenger to Dr. Willis's, to let him know that two ladies, one in a melan-

choly, and the other in an outrageous state of madness, had ordered a chaise for London, and enquiring if they should permit them to proceed. He returned for answer, that we might go to the *devil!*

We lost no time in leaving a place which was so disagreeable to me, and arrived in London, where I was afraid to remain, as my being in town began to be rumoured abroad, which obliged me to seek security in the house of a friend at Chelsea; but there, alas! my ill-fortune followed me, for I was not there many days before a creditor found me out, and I was arrested. As I had not the means to settle the debt immediately, I was necessitated to go to the

King's-bench, where I remained a few months. A winter's cloud seemed to hang over every moment of my life; my philosophy began almost to fail me; but misfortunes became at length habitual, and I submitted to my wayward fate. However,* I still enjoyed the secret and heartfelt pleasure, that my much-loved children were advancing in their education and years; and still cherished the idea they would comfort me in my old age, and repay all my maternal cares.

The long-expected letter from Mr. S—— at length arrived from India: he sent me a present of a piece of muslin, but no money—not even so much as would pay for the maintenance of his

son, whom I had taken the greatest care of, and who was at that time at nurse at Mitcham Common. His father, who, as I have before mentioned, resided at Lincoln—but had now changed his residence to Leather-lane, Holborn—had more reason to bless the Swallow packet than I had; for Mr. S—— (forgetting the old proverb—“Be just before you are generous”) sent the old man a remittance of one hundred pounds; and he no sooner perceived that his son was in a situation to assist him, than he went to Mitcham, and took away his young grandson from the nurse without my permission; when the infant, either from neglect, or some disease con-

tracted in the purlieus of Leather-lane, soon bade adieu to this transitory world, and, happily for the sweet infant, he was taken at a time of life when death is deprived of all its horrors. All hopes of remittances being at an end, and my affairs in England being in a most deranged state, I accepted of an engagement, from the manager of the Dublin theatre. I was preparing to depart for that city, when Mr. T—— called upon me one morning—with a long face and a serious manner, such as well-informed hypocrites usually assume, or, as they are termed at the present day, men of the world (I should have said, the man of *The World*)—to propose to me a governess for our

children. He began by telling me I was perfectly well acquainted with the story of Miss T——s, and proposed her as a proper person.

The history of this unfortunate lady was to have been published by my late honoured friend Mr. Woodfall, which he did not live to carry into effect ; and, as far as the narrow limits to which I am confined will allow me, I will endeavour to acquaint the world with her unhappy fate.

She was the second daughter of a gentleman who held a considerable situation in Somerset-house, which enabled him to give all his children an elegant education, and support them in such a style as to mix with the first

circles. They had a handsome villa in the country, whither Mr. Topham was invited in the shooting season. During his visit he paid his addresses to this lady ; and, unfortunately for her, was too successful in gaining her affections, which he ever, even to enthusiasm, possessed. In an ill-fated moment she listened to his ardent protestations ; and, in some months after, gave to the world a proof of their intercourse, and his breach of the laws of hospitality. The result was (the most useless of all expedients on such occasions), she was desired by her father to seek another home, and turned from the house which gave her birth to subsist upon the mercy of strangers.

Mr. T—— was called out by her brother, who was in the Guards; but it was one of those bloodless battles, where honour (*the proud boast of an Englishman*) was lulled to sleep by a simple flash of powder in a pan! They fought; but the situation of the unfortunate lady remains unameliorated to this day. Her father, when too late, saw his error in the conduct he had adopted; and, giving way to his feelings, departed this world to account, before a *merciful* Creator, for rejecting a repentant sinner. Thus, in a little space of time, was she deprived of father, brother, friend, or home! Her first child died; and the infatuated woman was the mother of a second,

who, at the time of his proposal, was nine years of age.

Knowing her to be a lady by birth, and her education much superior to my own, I consented, with a proviso she should be allowed to take her daughter with her, as I conceived she had equally as good a claim to the protection of his roof as my own, which he rejected ; and she, of course, the situation, as she would not abandon her child : and she has lived ever since, in the greatest poverty and obscurity, an object of commiseration to every feeling heart, and entirely forsaken by her betrayer, I really believe, for no other reason but her poverty ! But I hope he will one day consider, that a

time will come when he must account for all his actions at a just *tribunal*, and not leave repentance for a death pillow, for *there* Nature will revolve upon her axis; and those sophisticated ideas, which in the hey-day of youth, and a fashionable world, were called forth as a palliation to every breach of religion and morality, must at that awful crisis be looked on with merited detestation!

I was received in Ireland, among that hospitable people, with great politeness, and experienced a number of civilities from the nobility and gentry of that country. For the benefit of the air, I took up my residence at a place

called Dunleary, about five miles from Dublin, one of the watering places in the neighbourhood of that metropolis.

I had not been in Ireland a week, before I was arrested for the powder which had nearly suffocated the Cherokees. The business was immediately settled by a Mr. Woodmason, to whom I carried letters. Fearing that my other creditors, with whom I had involved myself on my brother-in-law's account, would treat me in the same manner, I resolved to return to my native country as soon as possible. But I was under an engagement to Mr. Daly, and to get it cancelled was absolutely neces-

sary. I waited upon him, told him my disagreeable situation, and that I was very much afraid it was only the forerunner of more serious troubles; when that gentleman, being convinced of my sincerity and of the critical state of my affairs, immediately brought out my articles, and tore them before my face. His gentleman-like conduct on the occasion relieved my mind from a vast deal of anxiety, and I set out instantly for England.

My short trip to Ireland certainly raised the people of that country in my estimation. Their attention to strangers is unbounded, and extremely grateful to the feelings. To know them

you should assuredly go among them, when all the idle tales which have crept into the world, engendered by prejudice and nurtured by slander, immediately vanish before your sight, and you see them in their natural colours—an enlightened, open-hearted, and generous people. They possess all the gaiety and politeness of the French, without any mixture of their levity and insincerity.

On my arrival in London, I received a letter from Mr. Topham, expressing a wish I would go to Thaydon-lodge to superintend the education of my children; which task I cheerfully obeyed, and there joined my mother and my much-loved infants, and for the

first time heard of Miss Walton. I continued with them in this peaceful retreat till the summer of 1790,

“ Forgetting the world, and by the world forgot.”

All the ambitious views that once disturbed my bosom tranquillised into a settled calm; and, busied in my endearing occupation, I forgot that I was unhappy, when a letter from town announced the arrival of my sister from India. Like the way-worn sailor from a long and dangerous voyage, when he views at length his destined port where all his toils and perils are to be forgotten in the happiness she is about to enjoy in his native land, did I feel at her arrival. Little did I think that the sunshine of

my hopes was to be so soon overshadowed by the clouds of misfortune, and the castles I was erecting in the air should immediately vanish like dew before the morning-sun.

I hastened up to London with my family, and secretly anticipated the pleasure I should feel in settling with my creditors, not having the least doubt that she had come from the East for the sole purpose of settling my affairs. But on my arriving at Osborne's hotel, in the Adelphi, I was soon undeceived: she informed me she had not brought me any money, but had come home for the benefit of her health. I took lodgings near hers, in Arundel-street in the Strand, and accompanied her to all the

public places. Her parade of black servants, and the friendship subsisting between us, led my creditors to suppose that she was both able and willing to pay my debts. They accordingly arrested me; and, not having the least hope of getting a settlement, I was removed to the King's-bench*.

The vicissitudes of life are so numerous and so little foreseen, that one might be almost led to imagine the outlines of our lives are marked out by Providence; and, actuated by those passions which are implanted in the human bosom, one must be something more than mortal to subdue all those nice feelings which force themselves on

* See Appendix [L].

us when we are most unguarded—at those critical instants that often determine our future fate. I entered the prison with the most disagreeable ideas. I was now confident, that, from my own family, I had no hope of liberation; and the means of existence, in confinement, at the best were but precarious. I had even very great difficulty in procuring a sight of my children (in town on a visit), who were preparing to go into Yorkshire; nor indeed would that consolation have been granted me, but for the kind interference of the hon. Captain Blackwood, whose mother (the present Baroness) was acquainted with Mr. T.

I remained three weeks in the King's-bench before I heard a word

from Mr. T.; nor was any attempt whatever made to liberate me. I was then under the necessity of disposing of several valuable articles at a very great disadvantage, to procure a trifling supply of money. Mr. T. sold his paper—as my state of mind did not allow me to conduct it any longer—and was in Yorkshire, revelling in the charms of Miss Walton; nor did he éven condescend to acknowledge there was such a person in existence as Cowslip—the once *independent Cowslip*, who had been enabled to call herself so by her own exertions. There was now an appeal to be made to his *purse*, the dear idol of his *affections*, and which all his life he worshiped with the most fervent adora-

tion—indeed not only his own, but that of *others*: that was too tender a string to touch on; nor could the different papers or publications of the day shame him into (what any other man on earth would have conceived his duty) a commiseration of my unhappy fate*. Had he even called upon me, to render my situation in confinement as comfortable as he could (he had time enough, for I had been deprived of my liberty six weeks), there might be some apology for his conduct, and no excuse left for any impropriety in mine. But his *feeling* heart would not *allow* him to enter a prison.

It is impossible for any one to account for a prisoner's actions; many of

* See Appendix [M].

the little *etceteras* of a prison-life proceed from necessity, many from folly, and many from despair. I had now undergone many years of persecution, and life began to be almost a burden. I had no one I wished to preserve it for : my children were sent to a great distance ; and their father endeavouring, by every means in his power, to wean their affections from me, and himself shewing that cold affection which but ill suited my ardent disposition. Under such circumstances, and in such a place as a prison, every little attention pleases, every mark of civility is repaid with double thanks. Neglected by my friends without, a gentleman (such I may truly call him) offered his assist-

ance, for which I was grateful.....
 Read the few foregoing lines over
 again, and blame me if you possibly
 can.

The few months I spent in prison were rendered as agreeable as possible by that gentleman (the honourable Captain Blackwood); and the day at length arrived when he was to bid the prison farewell. On the morning of his departure, he informed me he had purchased the rules for me, and begged I would walk out with him; but conceive my astonishment on being told at the gate I was free! The sum for which I had been detained was fifteen hundred pounds, which was paid without a murmur by that generous Hibernian.—The

contrast between his conduct and that of some of my family ought to make them blush.

Immediately after my liberation, I went to a small cottage at Merton, where I resided for some time. Capt. B. was promoted to the rank of Major, and orders at length came to him to join his regiment in the West Indies. That worthy and best of men solicited me to accompany him, but I refused, out of respect to my children, which I have ever since had reason to regret.

After his leaving the kingdom I removed to Brompton, where I resided for some time, quite secluded from the world; and at length returned again to Merton. I lived in my little cottage

a retired life; a few select friends favoured me with their society;—my wants were few—

“ Man wants but little here below,

“ Nor wants that little long ;”—

but my feelings were as acute as ever ;
nor could all the

“ Stings and arrows of outrageous fortune ”

blunt them ; for, in a short time after,
they were put to the test.

I came to London to see one of Mr. Reynolds's plays—‘ How to grow Rich.’ Struck with the name, I determined to learn the lesson ; but, notwithstanding the attention I paid, I benefited nothing by it. A gentleman.....

I must apologise for the misapplication of the word ; but by a figure in rhetoric called *custom*, and being a genteler one than *blackguard* to put in a memoir, I have inserted it : however, as both are before you, choose which you please ; and, to end the dispute, I shall say a *man*....sat next me in the box, and kept his seat during the whole of the performance. As I was preparing to depart, he came up to me, and told me that he did not wish to prevent my seeing the performance, but was under the disagreeable necessity of telling me he had a writ against me. Upon my demanding at whose suit, the old *words*, on 'account of your

brother-in-law, assailed my ears. The vultures gnawing the liver of Prometheus were not more dreadful to him than those securities which I had entered into for Mr. S— were to my peace of mind. Every time that I thought to be a little composed, something or other, at an unlucky moment, presented itself to my view.—Mr. S—— should recollect, when he casts an eye over these lines, the misery I underwent for him, at those periods, was the means of his *now* rolling in affluence and splendour at the west end of the town, while I am indebted to the theatrical fund for my humble subsistence.

Mr. Reynolds politely escorted me to

Beaumont's, in Wych-street, from whence, next morning, I wrote to my friends. I continued in this peaceless retreat for three weeks : my writ became returnable, and there was no judge in town to sign a habeas-corpus to my old habitation. In this situation I was compelled either to go to the county-jail, or go down to some judge's seat to get his signature. Of two evils I had determined to choose the least : as the judge would not come to me, I resolved to go to him ; and accordingly set out for Lord Kenyon's seat, accompanied by a female friend, a bailiff, and a *tipstaff*.

The servants, seeing a lady stepping

out of a coach with four horses, made a great parade at my *entrée* ; but when they understood I was a prisoner, the muscles of their faces, which had been drawn up into a smile of obeisance, instantly assumed a different appearance ; and the “ pampered menial,” drawing a line of comparison between his (in his own opinion) enviable situation to mine, threw open the door of a dressing-room, and impolitely desired me to walk in—such power has the very idea of misfortune over the human actions ! On my going into the room I beheld the *terror* both of rich and poor, of wise men and fools, of old and young. I even dared to touch it with unhallowed

hands, and addressed *it* in the following manner, without even the formality of an introduction :—

‘ I hope *you* will excuse the liberty I take in coming down from London to trouble *you* ; and as the situation of the unhappy prisoner is far beneath *your* notice, pray forgive me thus intruding on *your* solitude. I have come this distance to beg *you* will have the humanity to commit me to the King’s- bench, as that furnace of the money of the unfortunate prisoner—a lock-up-house—has consumed all mine.’

It replied, in an audible voice, in the following manner :—

‘ My good lady, be not frightened at *my* appearance. The constitution

of this country is so happily blended, that my master, who, on the seat of judgment, is the representative of the greatest monarch in the world, requires my assistance as a mere matter of form ; for so strict is the royal personage whom he represents, in the love of his subjects, his moral and religious duties, that he never would, even in the slightest minutiae, allow the least deviation from the laws of honour and happiness of his people : and, madam, what makes this country like a rock in the middle of a tempestuous sea is, the paths that every member of its government are to tread are scrupulously pointed out, from the monarch to the knight of the shire ; which were so happily arranged by the saga-

city of our forefathers, that, in enlightened Europe, it is the only remaining ancient government—which the virtues and honest heart of our king has in a great measure contributed to; and if we may judge from what we have already seen of his dutiful and beloved Son, the rights and constitution of an Englishman, unsullied and unshaken, will be handed down to posterity!

It would have continued; and I could, with pleasure, have listened to names so dear to every Briton. But *its* master came into the room, and interrupted *it*, with a reproof for telling state secrets.

My reader will no doubt wish to know with what I had been so long

conversing: it was no other than....
a judge's wig!

My commitment to the Fleet being made out, I was handed over to the custody of a tipstaff (a superior order of blackguard), by Beaumont, the sheriff's officer, who, on my going into the carriage, had the impudence to step in and seat himself; but I instantly ordered him out, and left him his choice to travel to London two ways—either to walk or stand behind: he chose the latter, to which I consented. On my *entrée* to the Fleet, a foreboding of some misfortune hung over me, which the appearance of the long dark galleries of that prison rather heightened than allayed. My heart, the faithful

thermometer of my feelings, misgave me ; I was once more obliged to regard the troubles of this world as a bubble, which would not burst till the silent maizes of a tomb would receive me in its cold embrace. The friends I had in the sunshine of my prosperity had dropped off one by one, and I was left almost destitute. It is impossible for any one to imagine my situation, but those who have been placed in a similar one.

About this period, for the first time, I saw Mr. Sumbel, my late husband, of whom I think it necessary to mention a few particulars, to elucidate some circumstances concerning him, which, if at all, are but imperfectly known to

the public.—Mr. Sumbel was born in the capital of the dominions of the Emperor of Morocco, to whom his father had been prime minister upwards of thirty years; from whence he was sent to France for his education. The numerous remittances sent to him by his father being discovered by the emperor, the old man was thrown into prison, from whence he contrived to make his escape to Gibraltar, to which garrison he sent considerable supplies from Mogadore, when it was defended by the brave Elliott, which eventually occasioned his death, as he was afterwards poisoned by the intrigues of the emperor.

Mr. Sumbel, being a Jew, his two

brothers went over to France to him to claim their share of their paternal inheritance, which they were entitled to do by the Mosaic law ; but, to avoid coming to a settlement, he went into Holland, and from thence came over to England, where one of them followed him. On his arrival in this country he waited on Lord William Bentinck, with whom he had been acquainted on the continent, and was, by his lordship, introduced to his brother, the Duke of Portland. Shortly after his coming to town, he heard his brother had come over in pursuit of him ; and, to avoid such a disagreeable visitor, he retired to the woods near Wilsden-green, where he concealed himself by day, and at

night got into some barn, or any place he could find, to sleep. He concealed India-bonds to the amount of five thousand pounds in the hollow of an old tree, which he was never after able to find out. The oddity of his appearance, and the quantity of diamonds he had about him, which he often shewed to the peasants to induce them to let him sleep in their cottages, at last created a suspicion in their minds that he must be the man who had robbed the Turkish ambassador. They accordingly determined to seize him, and give information of him at the Duke of Portland's office; which, with the assistance of the constable of the parish, they did, and tied him to a post in a stable. In

this situation he remained till the duke sent a Mr. Walsh with a chaise-and-four for him. He no sooner heard the description of him, than it immediately struck him it must be the same Mr. Sumbel who had been introduced to him so lately by his brother.

The duke could not extract one word from him : to all the questions that were put him, he gave written answers to ; nor did he utter a syllable for three months, for some private reason which he never disclosed.

The circumstance of his being at the duke's office reached the ears of the person who had the chancellor's writ against him, at the suit of his brother : he set off instantly, arrested him as he

was coming out, and conveyed him to Wright's lock-up-house in Carey-street. He continued there about six weeks; nor could they, by any means, prevail on him to speak one word. The hearing before the chancellor at length took place; and the only answer he made to the many questions put to him by his lordship, was—"My lord, I wish you would send me to the Fleet, for that is one damn'd rascal!" (pointing to Wright.)

His lordship used every argument in his power to make him come to a settlement with his brothers; but finding he was determined to the contrary, committed him to the Fleet.

I was in the prison at this time:

he came in with all the pomp and splendour of an eastern monarch, attended by a number of Moorish servants. A report had run through the prisoners, that some foreign ambassador had been committed for contempt of court; and as curiosity is not the most dormant passion in the female breast, mine (you must naturally suppose) must be gratified, or peace I could not have.

A lady in the prison, who had seen me play Roxalana, said, in a jesting manner, "Let us have a peep at the sultan." We went into the gallery, had a slight glance at him, and returned to our rooms, conceiving that our innocent frolic would end there; but in that we were disappointed, for next

morning I was given to understand he had been asking a number of questions concerning me. — Let any woman on earth tell me she is not fond of being enquired after, and I will immediately say to her, she is both a coquet and a hypocrite !

The following Saturday, being his Sabbath, he sent a polite invitation for me to dine with him, and bring with me any ladies I thought proper. I a little before hinted at my curiosity, but it was now wound up to the highest pitch. I determined, therefore, to accept it ; and, having put on the best bib-and-tucker my wardrobe could afford, accompanied by two ladies, I repaired to dinner. On our entering the room,

which was fancifully hung with pink satin, we found there several of the Turkish ambassador's suite, and several gentlemen of that nation. One old man, of the name of Abbo, took a fancy to me, and made formal proposals of marriage; but I rejected them with disdain, which afterwards nearly cost Mr. Sumbel and me our lives, as the old wretch actually returned to the prison to assassinate us; but timely notice enabled us to frustrate his design, and he was never afterwards permitted to enter the gates.

A short time previous to this, an offer was made to me to pay my debts, and liberate me from confinement, by — The circumstance is so well known, that those who are not

acquainted with his name may easily guess it; and those who are, need not be told it. This circumstance coming to the ears of Mr. Sumbel, the fear of losing me operated so strongly on his mind that he made me proposals of marriage, which I accepted. An insolvent-act taking place shortly after, I obtained my liberty in one way, though I had just given my consent to lose it in another.

An obstacle, however, still stood between us, which was requisite to be got over before we could be lawfully united. My former husband, Mr. Wells, I had reason to suppose was still living, although I had neither seen nor heard from him for upwards of twenty years.

Every advice was taken ; and it was at last decided I must turn Jewess, which I accordingly did, and we were married agreeably to the rites of the Jewish church.

It will now be supposed that I was near the *finale* of all my troubles : my husband was rich, young, and indeed I may add handsome ; but, I am sorry to say, he was haughty, irascible, and jealous in the extreme. He determined, that, notwithstanding the ceremony was to be performed in a prison, it should be conducted with all the profusion of eastern magnificence : it took place in the week of the great feast of the tabernacle of the Jews, and lasted the entire of it. The genteel prisoners were

invited to partake of the fare, and the poor were not forgotten: four rooms were lighted up on the occasion; and a large lustre was placed in the middle of the long gallery, which cost twenty-five pounds. The sum total of the extraordinary for that week alone came to five hundred pounds*.

About a fortnight after our marriage, I prevailed on Mr. Sumbel to compromise with his brother, which he immediately complied with: he gave him twenty thousand pounds, and obtained his liberty. After his emancipation, he took a house in Orchard-street, Portman-square, to be near the Turk-

* See Appendix [N].

ish ambassador, with whom he was intimate, and often visited.

Not conceiving it sufficiently large, we took one in Pall-mall, next door to the Duke of Gloucester's, where my husband's real disposition began to shew itself in its natural colours. He was so extremely jealous, that when he went with me to the theatre, I dare not, for my life, look any where but on the stage; and that not for any length of time, or the consequence would be, I should be immediately knocked down; which I underwent more than once.

The old proverb—"That riches seldom bring with them any real happiness," was truly verified in me; for though the diamonds I wore, of im-

mense value, were allowed me on state-days and bonfire nights, on my return home they were taken from me (not in the most delicate manner), and committed to the care of the iron chest. I was, upon no pretence whatever, allowed to see them, except in his presence ; and as to money, I was never suffered to have even a shilling in my pocket, for fear I should run away !

The feeling manner in which he took the diamonds from me has left such an impression both on my mind and body, that I cannot omit mentioning one instance of it :—On our return from a party one evening, he, as usual, demanded the sparkling troubles, all of which I delivered up but the ear-rings,

which I was preparing to take out. Conceiving I did not obey his Moorish commands with sufficient promptitude, he seized hold of one of them, and tore it entirely through my ear.

The misery I underwent from his horrid disposition was such, that I resolved to quit London, to try if a change of scene would alter circumstances. My former troubles were trifling, compared with what I now underwent.

My children lived in the Wolds of Yorkshire, and by great persuasion I prevailed on him to make a tour of that county. The incidents that occurred in that short period are so numerous, I hope I shall be excused entering into

the different minutiae of them. If there be any comfort on this earth, it is to relate our griefs to a friend, which a generous public have ever been to me.

We set out in an elegant vehicle, commonly called a one-horse-chaise, without a servant : but my bosom beat with maternal feeling ; and hope, while it presented their image, wholly obliterated every sensation of timidity, and every conscious blush for my humiliating appearance.

Though wedded to a man whose wealth was estimated at nearly half a million-- a man for whom I changed my religion, and with all the forms and solemnities of that which I adopted, in conformity to his will, became the re-

ceived and accepted partner of his fortune—I was obliged to commence my journey without even the attendants which were necessary to my safety, and which my state of health at that period demanded.

We lived, for some time previous to our setting out, in a small cottage near the Hyde, in Middlesex, in order to screen my illustrious husband from the penalty of a prosecution, which had been given against him for having assaulted a citizen. This cottage had been hired by a respectable lady through friendship for me, and we resided with her under the denomination of lodgers. From thence I departed, accompanied by my husband. The irritability of his

temper became evident before we had proceeded ten miles on our journey. The consciousness that he had none of his usual pompous attendants—no turbaned lacqueys to watch his eyes, and tremble at his frown—rendered him so peevishly insupportable, that I began to anticipate the displeasing circumstances which but too rapidly followed. I found him sullen, restless, impatient, and wavering, in his determinations; for constancy was not one of his perfections.

At the first inn where we stopped, his manner spread dismay through the bosoms of all those that witnessed it; but my mind was filled with terrors inexpressible. I trembled at the glance

of the “turbaned Turk;” and he availed himself of my timidity—for his valour augmented in proportion as mine diminished.

The graces of his person were not visible in the European habits. This circumstance augmented his chagrin; and he did not recover any portion of his placidity till he sat cross-legged in all the magnificence of his Moorish paraphernalia. For this important metamorphosis, his trunks were at every stage unpacked, and I had the supreme felicity of seeing my *illustrious* partner, once, during every twelve hours, decked in the splendours of a second OTHELLO. —How far this character was sustained, future page will discover.— Even his

Moorish habit did not tranquillise his mind ; domestics were still wanting : he therefore informed me, that he would proceed no farther, but return to town, and recommence his journey *like himself*. This promise did not exhilarate my hopes, or enliven my prospects ; for, to travel *like himself*, afforded me no chance of credit or consolation !

After much persuasion, he consented to drop the *incognito* ; and, by paying the penalty of his lawsuit, resume his native character. This thought delighted me ; for it has ever been repugnant to my feelings to appear mean or degraded. Unhappily my gratification was the source of his instability ; again he changed his mind, and we proceed-

ed in *demi-pomp* on this journey of disasters. My Moorish lord proposed driving the one-horsed car in all his Turkish magnificence; but as there would have been some difficulty in sitting cross-legged on the narrow seat, and as an idea might have suggested itself that he would have been mistaken for the renowned Elickton* of puppet-show memory, the plan was not adopted. The forty pounds likewise preponderated in the scale of reflection; and he knew that he must pay the penalty of his lawsuit by an attempt to assert the *dignity* of his character.

* A man who carried a ridiculous puppet-show round the country. His people were dressed in Turkish habits.

On we went, half the twenty-four hours in British simplicity, the other half in African grandeur. One hour I fancied myself the once happy *Cowslip*, and the next I knew, to my inexpressible sorrow, that I was the wife of a Moorish *nobleman*; while I would have rejoiced in perpetual security from insult, even had it been within the lofty walls of a Turkish haram.

At the second inn where we rested, if rest may be supposed to have attended our progress, an unlucky tear, which maternal tenderness extracted from my heart, so ruffled the serenity of my noble spouse, that he instantly demanded to know the cause of its appearance. This tear did not long offend him; for his

tone of voice so startled me, that it fell from my cheek and became invisible. But the memory of it did not so easily evaporate: he deemed it an insult to *his* ideas of wedded love to entertain the feelings of a mother: to be worthy of so *rich* a prize, he thought it necessary that I should abjure all the sensibilities of nature.

He knew that my heart panted to embrace my children: he therefore kindly proposed remaining some time at a pleasant inn on our journey. Again his passion for parade suggested the idea of sending for his turbaned attendants; till I—rather *mal-à-propos*—reminded him, with all due respect, that he had humanely driven them from their post of

dignity, and that they were at that moment selling rhubarb about the streets of the metropolis. Nor was the Moorish consequence a little degraded by their exhibiting the very liveries in which they had borne the Morocco standard when his Most Gracious Majesty went in state to St. Paul's cathedral!

On my *noble* lord's proposing to retard the progress of our elegant cavalcade, I felt an impatient sensation which made my very heart sicken at the thought of not seeing my little darlings. On stopping at the inn, honest Boniface committed an offence that was deemed little less than sacrilege: he saw me nearly fainting with vexation and terror, and, horrible to mention, dared

touch my hand as I descended from the carriage!—The storm now burst forth with impetuous fury. What! profane the hand of a Moorish wife!—touch the sacred and purified fingers of one honoured by so *illustrious* an alliance!—the offence was unpardonable. The alarmed host trembled while he heard such epithets made use of as Englishmen are not accustomed tamely to endure: but the happy mistake that the offence proceeded from a disordered imagination, rendered the host passive, and the husband secure.

Here, however, did not end the horrors of the scene. The hostess, supposing that she could please him better than her husband, brought me water to

revive my sinking spirits. This produced the effect which generally attends the hydrophobia ; and I trembled lest he should exclaim, in the words of a comic writer, “ Your Highness will get no water here ! ” The cooling beverage, however, met my colourless and trembling lips. I was next entreated, by the hostess, to repose upon a sofa, and to have—dreadful name—a *doctor* ! Had a peal of heaven’s thunder smote the ears of my astonished lord, his consternation could not have been greater. I really began to hope that he was petrified : but the rolling eye, the ghastly smile, too soon convinced me that my sorrows were not near their termination. The thought of reclining on a sofa was

deemed criminal, even to the very extent of criminality! A chaise and four was to be ordered; the car of wedded love, which Cupid had now abandoned, was to be led home; and the once-honoured reins consigned to plebeian hands.

Morpheus released me from my terrors, by lulling to rest the "perturbed spirit" of the Moor. Be it known that he possessed other treasures beside a wife; and, fearing that I might avail myself of the right to participate his fortune as well as his vexations, he started from his repose, and accused me of meditating to rob him. Fortunately, the strong-box had been left in the carriage, by which I was acquitted of so daring

an intention. The placidity of his soul was not, however, restored by this conviction of my innocence; though, with much condescension, he requested me to sing and to make myself agreeable, "as that was my *old profession*." Having been accustomed to a more indulgent audience, I but badly executed my allotted task; and though my tones were feeble, my heart was full. I was not like Orpheus of old, who charmed the *brutes*; for, though my best powers were exerted, there was nothing like harmony to grace the effect.

Little moved by the voice of sorrow—for I could not be gay in such society—like Gloucester in Rowe's celebrated tragedy, he now accused me of witch-

craft. He said that I had used some potent charm to win a heart of such *inestimable* value. Unconscious of the accusation, I was "in amazement lost:" and it would not have been astonishing had I, so tortured by such a Whisker-andos, realised the character of the frantic *Tilburina*. I can now laugh at these events, though at the moment they agonised me almost beyond my *patience*.

We at last arrived within a few miles of Lincolnshire: but the violence of the domestic storm yet remained unabated; and I was politely informed, after much altercation, that I might 'go to the devil.' Feeling no inclination to accept this kind permission—

having already seen a striking specimen of a demonian nature—I declined his proposal; and we stopped at the inn to decide on a more rational expedition. My amiable protector now enquired after a stage-coach, which might convey him to London. The landlady, alarmed by the peculiarity of his manner, requested me to inform her what ailed the gentleman. I knew not what to do, or how to explain his conduct: but, being destitute of money—no new circumstance since I had been honoured with the title of *a rich Jew's wife*—I requested the hostess to give me credit in a chaise, as far as Stilton. This I did in the presence of my husband. I informed her, that I had been

flattered with the hope of seeing my children, after four long years of absence. She was a mother, and her heart beat in sympathy with mine : but my amiable partner intimidated her with language that, though not new to me, surprised a stranger.

The host was less amazed than his good wife, because the fame of the Moor had unfortunately outstripped our speed, and impressed the hearers with no very flattering prepossession. I now found, for the first time in my life, the difference betwixt celebrity and notoriety : I had never aimed my harmless shafts of ridicule at the worthy or the unoffending ;—I had merely raised the genuine spirit of nature, where ar-

regance and overbearing pride had endeavoured to oppress me.

The landlord, with that blunt sincerity which characterises the name of honest JOHN, expressed his indignation at the Moorish custom of treating a wife ; and, though his gentle helpmate was somewhat alarmed at the furious Turk, he wisely counselled me to proceed on my journey, offering me, at the same time, a place in the stage-coach ! The vehicle had no other passengers ; therefore, with the Moor's concurrence, after tearing from my shoulders a shawl, which he called his property, I was permitted to depart. The joy of escaping from this watchful lynx—whose eyes, like those of the basilisk, never

ceased but to annoy me—is not to be described. Though divested of all the miserable mummary which my Moorish mate so idolised, I felt once more that I possessed something like respectability: but, alas! my flattering hopes were speedily destroyed; for we had not proceeded more than three miles, when the driver of the stage, my only companion, stopped his horses, and, leaning familiarly through the window, thus elegantly accosted me:—

“ Well—how do you do?”

“ Sir!” exclaimed I, with astonishment.

“ Egad! it is well you got rid of him,” said he.....“ But, I say, you have been kicking up pretty scenes through

the country! Why did you let him find you out?—I heard of you at the last inn. You need not mind about sending back the money;—I'll take care of that, if you'll go with me to Stamford to-night! Egad, you are a fine woman!—and we'll take a little brandy-and-water together. — I'll be your friend; for I like you!"

Language cannot describe the horror, indignation, and surprise, that nearly overpowered me at this moment of degradation. I could scarcely articulate—"Go on:" my lips trembled, and my heart beat with terror. I told the insulting charioteer, 'that if he did not proceed, my husband would overtake us.'

“That’s a good one!—you’ll not see him again. It is lucky you have met with such a friend!” said he: “Don’t be angry; I mean it well!”

On my commanding him to proceed, he drove on six miles farther, frequently honouring me with a familiar knock at the window, with “How are you now?” at the same time knowingly pressing his finger on his nose, and desiring me not to be unhappy, for all would be snug presently—“We will have a little brandy-and-water, and get better acquainted!”

This species of insult was so dreadful to my feelings, added to the terror of being alone in the carriage, that I even longed to be once again under the

protection of the Moor.—The reader will easily conceive that my situation must have been desperate indeed, to occasion the wish for so painful an alternative.

The stage now stopped at a small public-house; the coachman again knocked at the window, and desired me to alight:—"Come out," said he, familiarly; "and take some refreshment. What signifies crying!"—For by this time my tears flowed spontaneously.—

"Yes!" answered I, with a look of indignation—"I shall; and will wait for some other conveyance. I shall write to your master; for I am weary of your impertinence!"

“ Hey-day ! here’s a pretty scene ! ” exclaimed the fellow :—“ This woman is turned off by her husband ; we have trusted her as far as Stamford ; and now she has the impudence to say, that I have behaved improperly ! ”

The woman at the public-house now advised me to go on to my friends ; adding—“ As you have no money we cannot *take you in !* ”—an excellent reason. She then added :—“ We have no accommodations here ! ”

I now demanded to know how long the carriage stopped ; and was under the dreadful necessity of proceeding seven miles farther with this insolent guardian. He drove with the most furious velocity ;—I thought I should

expire with fear. On approaching within a mile of Stilton, he suddenly stopped, and again enquired whether my passion was over:—"We shall not stay long at Stilton; you may soon go on to Stamford, and you will see your friends."

On our arrival at Stilton I made myself known at the inn; called for pen, ink, and paper, to write to the coachman's master, and to inform him of the insolent treatment I had received during my journey. I had ordered tea in my chamber, being extremely indisposed with fatigue and apprehension. Just as I was sealing my letter, I heard a voice that almost annihilated me—it was the Moor, exclaiming, "Where is

my wife—the lady in the stage-coach?”

—He was informed that there was a lady up stairs, extremely ill. “That is my wife!” continued the Moor. I dreaded the consequences which would attend his knowledge of the coachman’s impertinence; the violence of his temper might have ended the scene with some tragical event, of more serious importance than any I had yet witnessed. On tearing open my chamber-door, just as I had concealed the letter, he cried vehemently — “My wife, are you sure that you took up nobody in the stage-coach? Convince me that you have seen nobody, and I will forgive you every thing!... I beg you not to tell your mother and children

what has passed, and I will never treat you so again !” These were the only kind words I had heard from him since the commencement of the journey.

The coachman was now sent for to be paid. His countenance, on entering the room, cannot be described : he twirled his hat, hesitated, and looked like a culprit. My husband enquired whether I had been spoken to by anybody : the man replied, “ No, sir,” with a timid and tremulous tone.

My husband now proposed to me rewarding the driver for his care and attentions. I fixed my eyes on the man, and emphatically replied, “ Give him nothing !” Then turning towards the fellow, whose courage had sunk

into trembling insignificance, whose countenance was wholly altered at the sight of the Moor, I added—"Go, man, with the money to your master; and take care, another time, not to drive so furiously." He bowed, and gladly departed.—I now drank some tea, and was put to bed extremely ill indeed. I was incapable of proceeding, and remained two days at the inn to renovate my strength.

On the second evening we set forward for Market Deeping. I then began to hope that I should, ere long, see my dear children: but, on my husband's looking over the Book of Roads, he unfortunately discovered that we were within four miles of the celebrated

Doctor Willis's. He instantly summoned the mistress of the inn to enquire the particulars of the cross route towards Gretford. Her consternation was evident; and my countenance changing, she interpreted it to my fear of the Moor's discovering some traits of insanity.

I now advised him to write a short note to Doctor Willis, to inform him, that on our return we would do ourselves the pleasure of paying him a short visit. He would not listen; but briefly informed me, that 'if I would not introduce him to the doctor, *he would introduce me.*' Feeling myself far above intimidation, I agreed to attend him, and accordingly introduced him to this

truly estimable character. Doctor Willis expressed his joy at seeing me united to so *amiable a gentleman*; for the Moor was now all meekness and complacency. He was then complimented for promoting my long-desired interview with my children; and the doctor was so partial as to add many flattering expressions, which it might have been like vanity in me to repeat.

By Doctor Willis's request we remained at Gretford that night; where every thing that proved both politeness and hospitality was manifested to give us welcome. On our chaise being ordered on the second morning, the doctor, wishing us a pleasant journey, said, 'He could not press me to remain

from my children after so long an absence; but hoped that, on our return, we would pass some days with him and Mrs. Willis.—We departed.

When we had proceeded sixteen miles, my husband recollected that the doctor had not acted congenially to *his* opinion of good breeding, in not pressing us to remain longer at Gretford. Heaven knows! it would have been a matter of indifference to me, if he had remained there all his days.—I forgot to mention that the doctor persuaded the Moor to travel handsomely; knowing that, in this country, all actions are influenced by outward appearances. He was therefore induced to buy another horse; and a noble lord, then on

a visit to Doctor Willis, permitted his groom to make the purchase.

As my husband counted the bank-notes, the nobleman, with an arch smile, desired him to give two or three more. I saw the fatal effect working in the mind of my companion by this new expense, though his pride would not permit him to avow his inquietude.

Though we had arrived at the distance of sixteen miles from Gretford, my husband, to my utter consternation, proposed returning. He complained that the new groom rode too near the chaise, and *looked at me*—an offence to him that was unpardonable. The chaise, at one period, being nearly overturned, the servant hastened towards it, when

the Moor exclaimed, "If you touch her, I will knock you down!" — "The chaise will overset, sir," cried the groom. — "Never mind: touch it if you dare!" was the reply. At the hazard of my life I jumped out of the chaise, and all was again accommodated. We arrived at the inn, and from thence set out on our return for Stamford. The Moor hired lodgings, and said he would send for my mother and the children—supposing that those who had the care of my dear girls would pay all the expenses. I now hinted that he should send a draft for the purpose. This unlucky proposition proved a new source of irritability. He refused to comply, and upbraided me for the expenses

already incurred on our adventurous journey.

At Stamford, the splendours of Moorish decoration were again exhibited, as they had been at Dr. Willis's. The whole town was roused to consternation. A *great prince*! — a *grand Turk*! — supposed by some to be insane, by others considered as *only* ridiculous. A superb dinner was ordered, and cards of invitation sent to many friends of mine resident in that part of the country: among others, one young lady came, who so strikingly resembled my eldest daughter, that, my spirits being entirely exhausted, at the sight of her I almost fainted. This proof of my agitation, as well as of my strong desire

to embrace my children, seemed to interest every individual then present; and the whole party united in persuading the Moor to permit that I should immediately hasten my journey. He consented, with this injunction most solemnly urged—that, during my absence from him, I would neither sleep nor undress myself. In this unreasonable proposal I readily acquiesced—for my wish to see my children overpowered every scruple. He then contrived to take me walking with him till the stage had passed. On our return he was sullen and ill-humoured.

On finding my journey still interrupted, I declared that I would delay setting out no longer. On the preced-

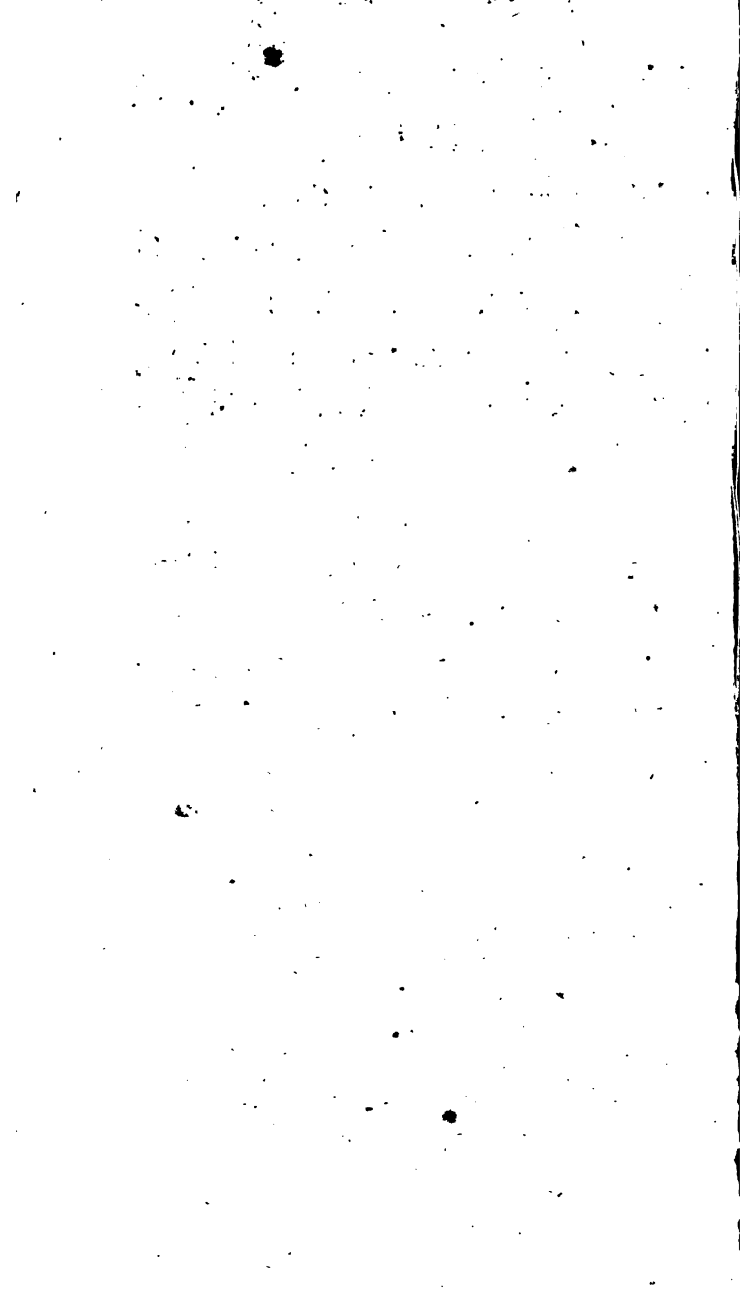
ing day he had presented me two guineas to buy a gown similar to one that was worn by Mrs. Willis. With that small sum I determined to depart, little supposing that, in a country famed for humanity, I should be exposed to the vexations which attended my expedition. I thought it right to inform Dr. Willis of my having obtained the Moor's permission to proceed, lest, during my absence, it should be erroneously represented. The doctor observed, that it was very imprudent to suffer my departure without a servant; and still more so to enjoin me not to rest during my journey, the danger of fever being probable from such a circumstance. The Moor was not apprised of the un-

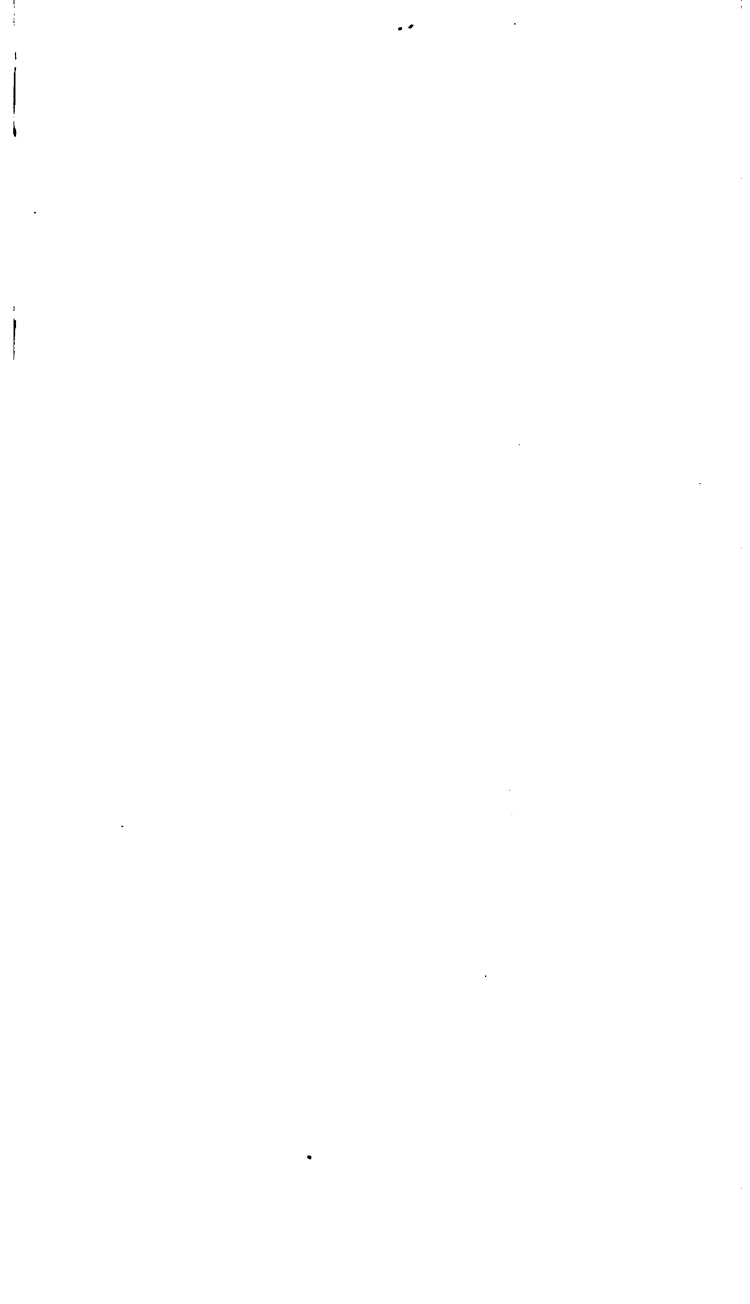
certainty in passing the Umler, where passengers are often detained by the tide and wind for several hours. I thanked the doctor, and wrote an affectionate letter to my husband, informing him that I should sleep at Lincoln by the advice of Dr. Willis; and flattered myself that common humanity would induce him to send me money for the necessary expenses of my journey. Without his aid, I had only two guineas to bear me the tedious distance of one hundred and thirty miles—alone and unprotected, depressed in spirits, and without even a change of habiliments.

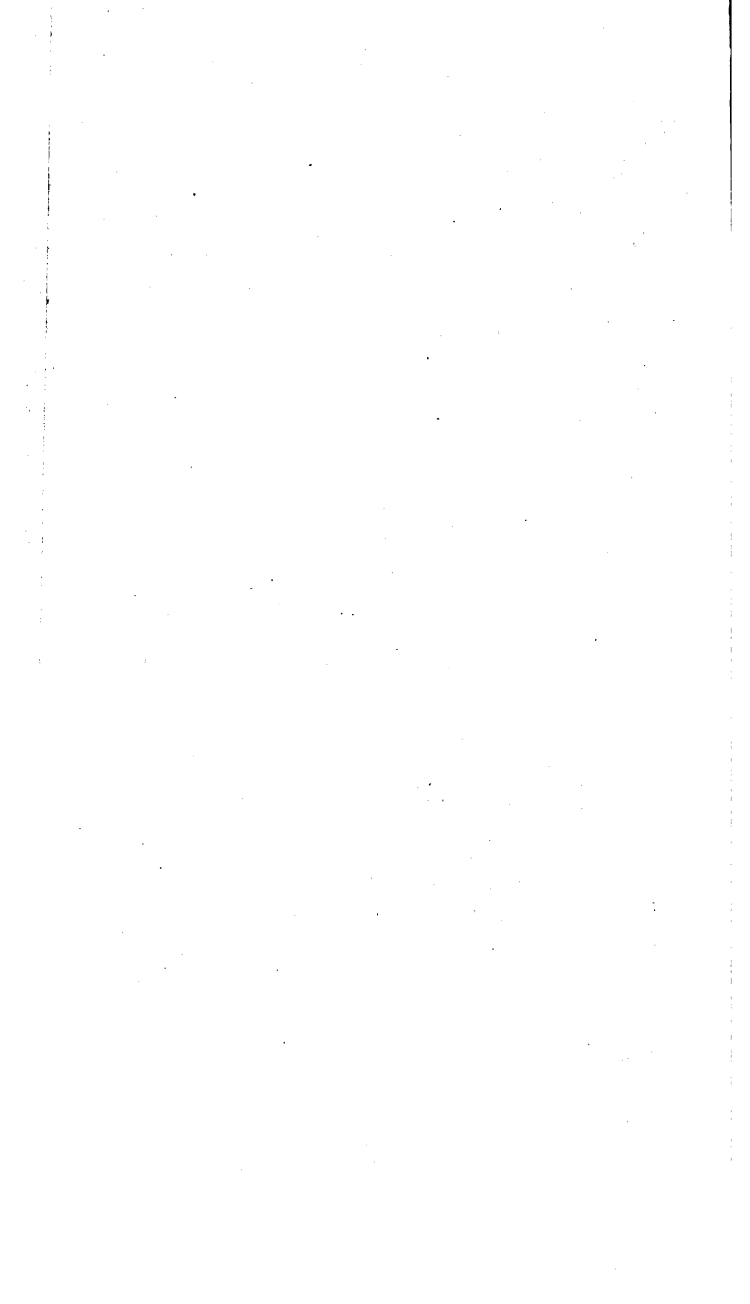
I proceeded on my journey one stage, where I wrote a letter to my husband, which I desired the post-boy

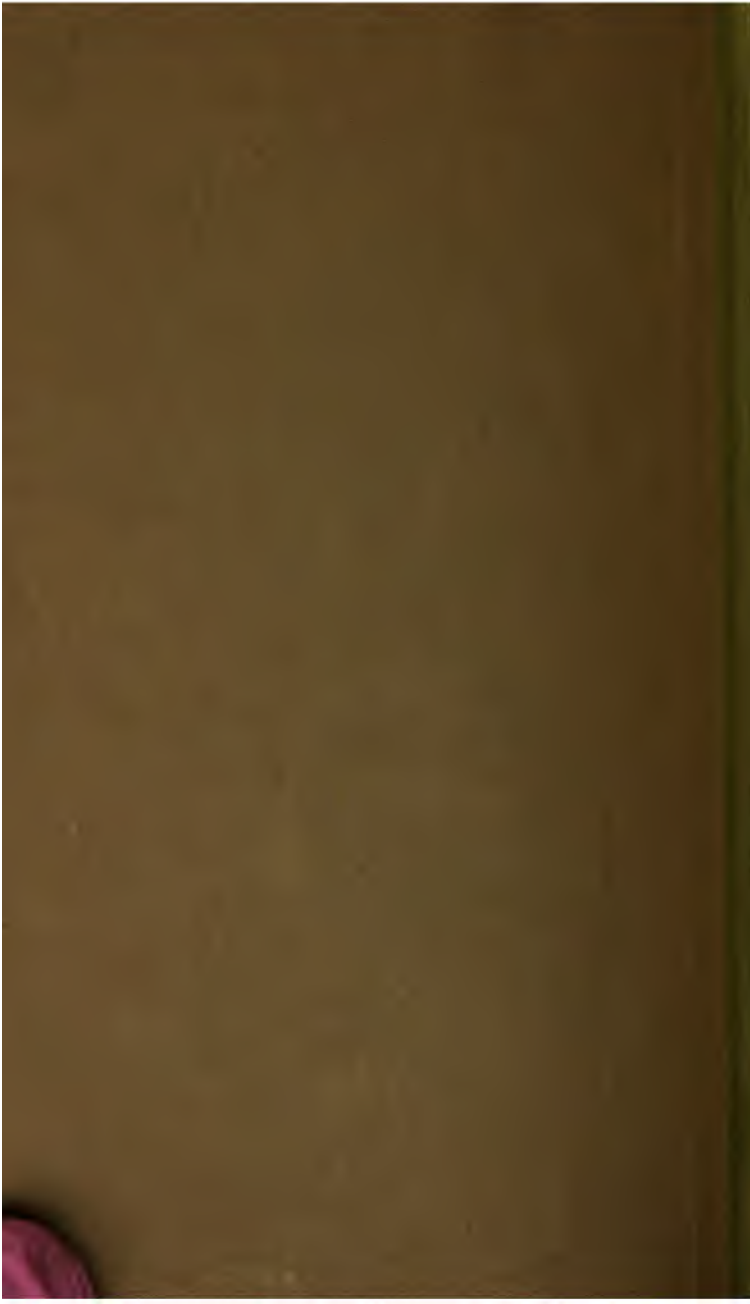
to deliver, as it would be the means of his being paid : he was then lodged in the High-street, Stamford. I set forward once more ; and, at the end of the next stage, the mistress of the inn informed me that she was going to Gretford the following day ; I therefore troubled her to take another letter to the doctor, entreating his interest with the Moor to procure money for my travelling expenses.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.









AUG 24 1963

